

# North Ridge Community School

Tenter Balk Lane, Adwick-le-Street, Woodlands, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN6 7EF

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Numerous changes in senior leadership over several years have resulted in insufficient progress being made in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' progress in English and mathematics is not consistent across the school.
- The role of subject leaders is insufficiently developed to enable the school to make strong and rapid improvements. The leadership arrangements in English and mathematics are at an early stage of development. As a result, there isn't a whole-school approach to the teaching and assessment of these subjects.
- The performance management arrangements for teachers are not sufficiently rigorous. Teachers' performance targets are not closely linked to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' progress and school improvement priorities.
- Over time, the 16 to 19 programmes of study have not closely matched the needs of all students or met statutory requirements. The new leader of 16 to 19 has quickly identified and implemented areas for improvement.
- Leaders' plans for the use of pupil premium funding, sports premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are not sufficiently precise. This prevents leaders from evaluating the effectiveness and impact of their actions.

### The school has the following strengths

- As a result of the local authority's concerns about the performance of the school, robust action was taken to replace the governing body with an interim executive board and appoint two experienced executive leaders. The new leaders have a clear vision and high ambitions for the school. They have quickly identified areas for improvement, made changes to school systems and improved staff morale. As yet, these changes have not resulted in improved pupil outcomes.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders have quickly reviewed and implemented areas for improvement. Pupils say that they feel safe.
- Children in the early years and foundation stage make good progress as result of strong leadership, a well-structured learning programme, detailed assessments and effective partnerships with parents.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that leaders promptly carry out a comprehensive assessment of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement, and that this information is used to prepare a detailed school improvement plan
  - ensuring that leaders implement robust monitoring arrangements to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to secure faster progress and consistently better outcomes for pupils
  - rapidly developing the role and impact of middle leaders, ensuring that they effectively contribute to rapid school improvement
  - ensuring that leaders use performance management to hold teachers to account and that targets are clearly linked to pupils' progress and school improvement priorities
  - ensuring that the impact of additional funding is evaluated precisely.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 and in 16 to 19 by:
  - ensuring that pupils make consistently strong progress in English and mathematics by improving teachers' subject knowledge and practice
  - reviewing the curriculum to ensure that there are improved opportunities to develop pupils' communication skills, personal and social independence skills and to effectively prepare pupils for adulthood.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not made sufficient progress to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.
- Over time, senior leaders and governors have allowed the breadth, balance and quality of the curriculum to weaken. Pupils' progress in mathematics and English is inconsistent across all key stages, and the curriculum has not consistently included sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' independence skills and prepare them effectively for adulthood.
- Over time, senior leaders and governors have failed to support the development of middle leaders and in particular subject leadership in English and mathematics. As a result, there has not been a whole-school approach to teaching, learning and assessment in these areas of the curriculum.
- Leaders' plans for the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up funding and sports premium, are not sufficiently detailed. Although leaders can describe the intended outcomes, the lack of progress measures prevents an accurate evaluation of whether the use of additional funding has been successful in achieving what was planned.
- The arrangements for teachers' performance management are not sufficiently robust. Teachers' performance targets are not clearly linked to pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and learning or school development priorities. In addition, targets do not reflect varying expectations for teachers at different career stages.
- As a result of local authority's concerns regarding the performance of the governing body, the school was issued with a performance warning notice in summer 2018, following which the leadership and management of the school was transferred to an interim executive board. The interim executive board took over responsibility for the leadership of the school at the beginning of the autumn term.
- In order to increase and improve leadership capacity, the local authority appointed the headteachers of two local special schools as interim executive leaders. These new leaders were appointed four weeks before this inspection.
- The new executive headteachers and interim executive board have quickly established an ambitious vision for the school and a culture of high expectations. Leaders have quickly and accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement; these now need to be described in detail in a school self-assessment and improvement plan.
- Since their appointment, the executive headteachers have quickly made changes to the school's systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, the assessment of pupils' progress, and the arrangements for teachers' performance management.
- Leaders have changed the monitoring arrangements of pupils' behaviour and attendance, started a review of the staffing structure and have appointed staff to key roles. They have made changes to the curriculum, for example introducing 'the morning mile', an outdoor education programme and an options programme for older

pupils and extending the range of accredited courses in the sixth form. Pupils and staff speak positively about these changes.

- Leaders have quickly identified priorities for curriculum development to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners. Leaders described their plans for a whole-school approach to the development of pupils' communication skills, and to start the programmes of study to develop pupils' independence skills before they move to the 16 to 19 department.
- Leaders have taken prompt action to develop a culture of shared ambition and high aspiration for pupil behaviour and outcomes. These changes have been based on the school's value statement, 'SHINE'. Leaders have used staff training to improve the arrangements for safeguarding, start a whole-school curriculum review and promote a shared vision for the school.
- After an extended period of change in the leadership arrangements, staff say that they now feel confident, empowered and well supported. Staff say that they have a shared vision for the school and are now working together more effectively to achieve better outcomes for pupils.
- The interim executive board meets frequently to monitor and review targets in a challenging improvement programme for senior leaders. The board reports that leaders have made good progress since the beginning of term.
- Members of the interim executive board, and the local authority's school improvement partner, report that there has been a significant improvement in the culture of the school since the beginning of term. They report that leaders and staff have a shared vision and that staff are working effectively with the new leadership team to secure strong school improvement. They are confident that the school has the capacity to improve rapidly.

## **Governance of the school**

- As a result of serious concerns about the school's performance and the quality of leadership and management since the last inspection, the local authority issued the governing body with a warning notice in the previous school year. As a result of governors not taking sufficiently robust action, the local authority removed the governing body at the end of the summer term 2018. The governing body was replaced with an interim executive board which was established at the beginning of the autumn term 2018.
- The interim executive board has a strong vision and high ambitions for the school, which it believes has the potential to make quick and rapid improvements. It has quickly identified the strengths of the school and key areas for improvement.
- Members of the interim executive board have skills and experience as senior leaders in education, governors of other schools, and in business and commerce. They are well placed to support and challenge senior leaders.
- The interim executive board have carried out a self-audit to check that they have the right skills to support senior leaders.

- The interim education board hold senior leaders to account by setting challenging and timely targets for school improvement.
- Members of the interim executive board have undertaken safer recruitment training and are experienced in the leadership of safeguarding.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have quickly established a strong culture of keeping children safe at North Ridge Community School. Staff know pupils well and speak keenly about their commitment to the children and making a difference to their lives.
- Regular training has enabled staff to keep up to date with the risks to children's well-being and safety. As a result, they are vigilant and quick to report any concerns. Staff are knowledgeable about the government's guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education'. Leaders have introduced an electronic reporting system that ensures that safeguarding concerns are reported promptly to senior staff.
- The new executive leaders have quickly raised the profile of safeguarding in the school and provide effective support to the designated safeguarding lead. As a result, there is a whole-school approach to keeping children safe where staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Leaders take prompt action to refer concerns to the local authority's children's services department and challenge the local authority when they are not satisfied with the outcome. Comprehensive safeguarding records are stored securely and demonstrate that the school works effectively with other agencies.
- Pupils are confident that they can talk to staff if they have a concern. Pupils are taught to stay safe online in information technology lessons, through the school's personal and social education curriculum and regular assemblies.
- Leaders have ensured that detailed risk assessments are prepared for lessons, out-of-school activities and residential visits. Leaders have reviewed and improved the arrangements for pupils arriving at school. The school site is secure, and pupils are protected from risk.
- Leaders understand that regular attendance is important to achieve good pupil outcomes. They work determinedly to tackle absence and have recently appointed a member of staff to lead on attendance. Almost all pupils are provided with home to school transport. First-day absence calls are made to parents where notice of absence has not been provided. Staff carry out home visits and work effectively with the local authority to challenge absence. As a result, attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now better than at other similar schools.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- Over time, leaders have repeatedly changed the school's assessment systems. This has led to inconsistencies in the quality and accuracy of information about pupils' progress.

As a result, leaders lack confidence that the information about pupils' progress is accurate.

- The arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been inconsistent. The evidence collected has not been compared with other information, such as that from lesson observations and the monitoring of pupils' progress and workbooks. The new leadership team has introduced a more robust monitoring system. The impact of these new arrangements is yet to be evaluated.
- There are differences in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics across all key stages. In some lessons the work does not accurately match pupils' starting points, and the support provided by teaching assistants is not matched to pupils' needs. In pupils' mathematics workbooks staff use photographic evidence and annotated notes to record pupils' achievements. However, this is not used consistently. Marking and feedback to pupils was inconsistent and did not help pupils understand the next steps in their learning.
- Leaders do not systematically evaluate the quality of teachers' planning. This leads to inconsistencies in breadth of the curriculum. For example, in mathematics, teachers concentrate on teaching pupils about number, this is at the expense of other areas of the mathematics curriculum, such as shape and data. As a result, pupils' progress in all areas of mathematics was inconsistent.
- The newly appointed leaders are clear about the actions that they need to take to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have set about this work purposefully and have quickly revised systems and procedures, and improved staff accountability. At the time of this inspection, it is too early to assess the impact of these changes.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent across the school. Where progress is good, teachers have high expectations, identify pupils' learning outcomes accurately and use resources effectively. In some lessons, activities and resources are not closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Recent changes to the content and organisation of the 16 to 19 programmes of study have had a positive impact on students' attitudes and interest. They now more closely meet the needs of all learners. Students learn functional skills in literacy and numeracy and, following a survey of students' interests, choose from a range of afternoon 'options' courses. Students speak positively about these changes and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- Leaders have recently introduced lessons and resources to help sixth-form students with the social and emotional aspects of learning. Activities and resources are closely matched to students' needs and help them understand and think about their behaviour and well-being.
- Adults use a range of methods to help pupils learn to communicate. Symbols are used extensively in school for class and individual timetables, to identify rooms and teaching areas, to make worksheets accessible, and to prompt pupils with 'now' and 'next' activities.
- When used effectively, staff use signing fluently to support communication with pupils and help them engage successfully in learning and social activities. However, staff do not sign consistently; as a result, the development of pupils' communication skills is

inconsistent. The recently appointed leader for communication has started a whole-school programme to train staff and implement a communication curriculum.

- Pupils' education, health and care plans are well structured and accurately record the views of parents and pupils. Pupil outcomes are clearly described and evaluated. However, the information about pupil targets is not consistently included in teachers' planning or pupils' learning outcomes.
- Most parents are confident in the work of the school and that they are well supported. They report that their child is making good progress, they are involved in reviewing their child's targets, they value the regular home-school communication and the welcoming attitude of staff. One parent said that North Ridge was 'an amazing school with amazing staff'. Another parent said that she had never doubted her decision to send her son to the school, she said that he has made very good progress since he started school at the beginning of term.
- Some parents reported their concerns about the repeated changes to the school's leadership team and high turnover of staff over a number of years. Parents stated that there have been fewer opportunities to be involved in school since the last inspection, and that they would like more information about the most recent changes in leadership and the plans for the school's future. Some parents would like support to help them communicate more effectively with their child.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know that they can talk to a member of staff if they are worried about anything. The majority of parents agree and say that their child is safe and well looked after.
- Most pupils travel to school on home to school transport. Leaders have recently reviewed the arrangements for the management of minibuses when they arrive at school. Staff meet and greet pupils; escorts and staff work together effectively to bring pupils into the building and pupils are registered as soon as they arrive at school.
- Many pupils have a long journey to school and, as a result, when they arrive at school they are not always ready to start learning. Leaders have recently introduced a 'morning mile' – a short period of walking and exercise at the start of the school day. As a result of this initiative, staff report that pupils are now calmer and that there has been an improvement in their behaviour, concentration and readiness to learn. Pupils are enthusiastic about this change.
- Pupils are confident and keen to talk about their work and achievements. They report that the teaching staff are doing a good job; one pupil said, 'There is nothing I would change, this school is perfect.' Older pupils say that they like the changes that leaders have made to the curriculum, they talk about learning to become independent, using public transport and attending a local further education college.

- Staff know pupils well, they provide sensitive care and support and speak with conviction about their commitment to the children. Parents speak positively about the pastoral care provided by staff. One parent said that, 'staff were always there to help' and that 'they went the extra mile'.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop responsibility. Leaders have recently re-established the school council, and senior leaders listen to and act upon pupils' ideas about how to improve the school.
- Pupils are taught to stay safe when using the internet. This is followed up in lessons and special assemblies. This information is shared with parents and carers through the school website and parent consultation meetings.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff set high standards for behaviour and pupils respond well to these expectations. Pupils' achievements, positive attitudes to learning, and good behaviour are rewarded by regular praise and encouragement, certificates and recognised in achievement assemblies.
- Pupils are well behaved in class, when moving around school and at break and lunchtime. They are respectful of one another, work together cooperatively in lessons and enjoy good relationships with staff.
- Pupils sit together in the dining hall at lunchtime and communicate with friends and staff. Some staff use signing effectively to prompt and support pupils. Pupils are learning to be independent at lunchtime. They confidently collect their meal from the school kitchen and return their dishes and cutlery. Some pupils are able to do this without staff support.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in school. Pupils are confident that they can speak to a member of staff if they have any concerns. Most parents agree and report that their child is safe at school.
- Staff provide sensitive and effective support. Teaching assistants provide support to individual pupils and small groups. They quickly help pupils re-engage with learning if their concentration falters during lessons.
- Levels of attendance are below the national averages for primary and secondary schools, though better than the average for similar special schools. Leaders understand that regular attendance is important to improve pupil outcomes, they have revised the leave of absence policy for pupils and now robustly challenge poor attendance.
- Leaders have started to analyse pupil behaviour in detail. Staff are trained to support children with challenging behaviour and feel well supported by senior leaders. Staff record behaviour incidents electronically. Leaders use this information to assess the needs of individual pupils and identify solutions to improve pupils' behaviour and engagement.
- As a result of effective programmes of behaviour support and individual behaviour management plans, there are few pupils that have had fixed-term exclusions. There have been no fixed-term exclusions since November 2016 and no pupils have been permanently excluded since the last inspection.



## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Assessment information shows that pupils make inconsistent progress in English and mathematics. Progress in all aspects of mathematics, other than number, is consistently poor across all key stages. Progress in English is strong in key stages 1, 2 and 3 and poor in key stage 4.
- The stronger outcomes in English are as a result of a whole-school approach to teaching and learning, and a programme of staff training in literacy and phonics, during the previous school year.
- Leaders have recently appointed a subject leader for mathematics. Leaders understand that there has not been a whole-school approach to monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in this area of the curriculum. The impact of these changes is yet to be evaluated.
- The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics are broadly the same or better than those for non-disadvantaged pupils.
- The outcomes for pupils in the early years foundation stage are good.
- Many pupils enjoy reading and spoke confidently to inspectors about their favourite books and authors. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to use their phonic skills to tackle new or unfamiliar words.
- Pupils are keen to communicate and use a range of different communication methods and resources. Most pupils communicate confidently, some using signing, gestures or symbols. Some pupils make strong progress in developing their communication skills as a result of effective staff support. However, staff support is inconsistent and, as a result, not all pupils make consistently good progress.
- The progress of pupils in the school's sixth form has been inconsistent. This is as a result of work not always closely matching the needs of all learners. Leaders have taken prompt action to review the organisation of teaching and learning, the content of the curriculum and to improve the range of externally accredited courses provided.
- Leaders in the sixth form have listened to students' ideas about the content of the curriculum. These changes have had an immediate impact on students' attitudes to learning.
- All Year 11 pupils stay on at school and move on successfully to the school sixth form.
- After completing their studies in the school sixth form, students move on successfully to a range of post school education and training. Some students transfer to the local further education college, some to a post school provider and others to supported employment. Leaders understand that they need to improve the opportunities for work experience to better prepare students for leaving school.

## Early years provision

## Good

- Pupils in the school's early years provision make good progress from their individual starting points. This is as a result of strong leadership, effective teaching, a well-

structured learning environment, detailed assessments and strong and effective partnerships with parents and other professionals.

- The classroom and outside play area provide a wide range of stimulating activities that successfully engage and interest children. Under the leadership of the early years teacher, staff work effectively to promote children's literacy and numeracy skills, their communication and social, physical and emotional development. Pupils are happy and learn to play safely and to cooperate effectively with one another.
- Staff use a range of strategies including signing and the use of symbols to support the development of children's communication skills. This work is supported effectively by the school's lead member of staff for communication.
- Pupil portfolios and learning journals provide a comprehensive record of each child's progress and identify next steps in learning. Assessment information is moderated by the local authority and discussed regularly with parents who are effective partners in their child's education. Parents speak positively about the close working relationship with staff and the regular opportunities to visit school.
- As a result of the strong early years provision, pupils are well prepared for their move into the main part of the school.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Requires improvement**

- Over time, the 16 to 19 study programmes have not closely matched the needs of all students or met statutory requirements.
- Since appointment, the new leader of the sixth form has quickly identified areas for improvement and made changes to the programmes of study, the timetable and the organisation of teaching and learning. Leaders have extended the range of externally accredited courses on offer and the opportunities to prepare students for adulthood. It is too early for leaders to evaluate the impact of these changes.
- Sixth-form students speak positively about the changes to the timetable, they say that they enjoy coming to school and value the opportunity to make choices about extended learning activities through the new afternoon 'options' programme.
- Leaders have introduced a range of functional skills courses in literacy and numeracy which more accurately meet the needs of students with a wide range of special educational needs.
- A new programme of social and emotional education is helping students think about how they understand their own behaviour and emotions.
- Students have started an enterprise activity where they prepare lunch and sell this to staff. Students plan the menu and learn important independence skills such as preparing food, budgeting and money management.
- Sixth-form learners are involved in a range of activities which support the development of their personal and social independence. In summer 2018, a group of six sixth-form students successfully completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award.
- Sixth-form students are self-assured and confident communicators. They were keen to communicate with inspectors about their work, and their plans for the future. Students

spoke enthusiastically about visiting the local further education college each week for information technology lessons; others spoke about work experience and what they would like to do when they leave school.

## School details

Unique reference number	135548
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10048258

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 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	41
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Riana Nelson
Headteacher	Karl O'Reilly and Lisa Suter, Executive Headteachers
Telephone number	01302 720790
Website	<a href="http://www.northridge.doncaster.sch.uk">www.northridge.doncaster.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@northridge.doncaster.sch.uk">admin@northridge.doncaster.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2016

## Information about this school

- North Ridge Community School is an all-age special school for children and young people with severe learning difficulties. All have an education, health and care plan.
- As a result of the local authority's concerns about the leadership and management of school, the governors were replaced with an interim executive board with effect from the beginning of the autumn term. At the same time, the headteachers of two local special schools were appointed as interim executive headteachers. The executive headteachers had been in post for four weeks at the time of the inspection.

- Since the last full inspection, the school had a one-day monitoring inspection by an HMI in October 2016. A number of priorities for improvement were identified.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is much higher than the national average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English is below the national average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. The website does not include detailed information about the impact of additional funding in improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils, increasing the participation of primary-aged pupils in PE and sports and the progress of Year 7 pupils who need extra help in English and mathematics. The website does not include information about examination and assessment results and links to the school and college performance tables service.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of lessons across a range of subjects, involving all year groups, early years and the sixth form. Joint observations were carried out with the executive headteachers and senior leaders. During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke to pupils and looked at their workbooks.
- Inspectors observed pupils arriving at school, at breaktime and lunch time.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the interim executive board, the school improvement partner, teachers and teaching assistants to discuss all aspects of the school's work.
- Inspectors considered eleven responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent survey, including free-text responses. They also considered the results of the school's survey of parent views. Inspectors held a meeting with 10 parents and they spoke to two parents by telephone. There were no responses to the Ofsted online pupil survey or staff survey.
- Inspectors held a meeting with a group of pupils from the primary and secondary departments and the school sixth form.
- A wide range of school records, documents and information were reviewed and discussed.

## Inspection team

George Gilmore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tricia Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

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