

# Dorin Park School & Specialist Sen College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111511
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	356929
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 April 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terence McKenzie

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>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	76
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	21
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Stuart Parker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Annie Hinchliffe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Wealstone Lane Upton, Chester Cheshire CH2 1HD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244 981191
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out two additional inspectors. Twelve part-lessons were observed involving 10 teachers. Planning documents and records were scrutinised and meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body and other nominated staff. Other informal discussions took place with teachers and pupils in their lessons and around the school. The inspectors observed the school's work, and read 36 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which teaching and the use of assessments encourage pupils to achieve as well as they are able in lessons.
- How effective is the curriculum in providing the best opportunities for all pupils to be included in their learning.
- How effective is the school's system for care, guidance and support, in enabling pupils to feel safe, attend well and to further their future life chances?
- How effective are the school's leaders and managers in planning for improvement the school and maintaining high standards?

## Information about the school

Dorin Park School provides education to almost equal numbers of boys and girls. The different groups of pupils have a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities including profound and multiple, severe, moderate and physical. Some experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and a small minority presents with autistic spectrum conditions. All have a statement of special educational needs. The school serves the large catchment area of Chester and Cheshire West. Around 10% of pupils travel to school from North Wales. Pupils can enter the school at any stage in their education and almost all stay until the end of the third year of sixth form. The mobility of pupils is much higher than for most schools because of the nature of pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities. Seven pupils have dual registration with a mainstream school, almost all are of White British heritage and the number known to be eligible for free school meals is very much higher than the national average. An extended school service operates for the sixth form and a night school offers facilities to members of the local community.

Dorin Park has maintained its specialist status in respect of special educational needs, cognition and learning. It has gained a number of awards through Investors in People, the Inclusion Quality Mark, the Green Flag Status Eco Award, the Family Learning and Involvement Kite Mark, the Gold Arts Mark, the BECTA ICT Mark and has maintained its Active Mark and Healthy Schools status. Since the previous inspection the school has remained registered for ages 2 to 19 but at the time of the inspection there were no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Internal changes have been made to the school buildings, the grounds have been developed to include a sensory garden and play areas, and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed.

**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

Dorin Park provides outstanding education and a very high standard of care, guidance and support. Highly valued by parents and carers, they report that pupils feel very safe. Pupils arrive with levels of attainment well below those expected nationally. However, while here, pupils demonstrate mainly outstanding outcomes.

Pupils enjoy their learning and demonstrate outstanding achievement because they are provided with unforgettable experiences. They enthusiastically adopt aspects of healthy lifestyles such as undertaking organised exercises. The strategies that enable pupils to contribute during lessons and through forums such as the highly active school council, despite their communication difficulties, are evidence that the school applies its specialism very well. Attendance is above average even though many have medical concerns. Pupils engage regularly with learning in school and through vocational placements and become extremely well prepared for moving on to the next stages of their lives. Pupils meet others from different communities through off-site visits, residential holidays and theatre productions. Thus, they make great gains in their cultural understanding in line with similarly outstanding spiritual, moral and social development.

Teaching is outstanding overall but occasionally inconsistent because not all teachers yet make the best possible use of assessment information to enable pupils to make maximum progress. In the sixth form, teaching is good and students make correspondingly good progress. The outstanding curriculum is highly personalised. It meets the wide variety of needs exceptionally well and is innovative in respect of the performing arts.

Managers are supported well by the good governing body. They accurately evaluate and rigorously monitor the school so that it continues to improve. They have instigated highly productive changes such as to the curriculum. New assessment systems help leaders and managers understand more about the quality of education but these processes are not yet fully embedded. Nevertheless, managers demonstrate high-quality improvements since the last inspection. These include much better involvement of families and improved links with the community. Excellent partnerships with agencies and other schools benefit many and demonstrate the utilisation of the specialist status. Excellent inclusive practices ensure that no pupils are discriminated against. Thus, the school demonstrates that it has outstanding capacity to improve even further.

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

- By September 2012 fully implement systems for assessments that will:
  - improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that all teachers, including those in the sixth form, set more focused individual lesson targets for pupils

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- enable senior leaders and managers to track the progress of individuals more closely to ensure that even more pupils can make the best possible progress.

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

**1**

The records of assessment and comparisons made with other similar schools indicate that the majority makes outstanding progress, regardless of their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils very much enjoy their learning and achieve exceptionally well. For example, one group of pupils demonstrated great enthusiasm when using computers to record their voices and view visual representations of sounds on a screen. Pupils contribute well because time is provided for them to develop thoughts and formulate replies. They provide detailed responses when in many circumstances elsewhere they might not have opportunities to do so because of their communication difficulties. Many perform in public in Shakespeare's plays. Older pupils gain useful qualifications and accreditations that confirm their consistent progress and the successes of their studies.

Pupils indicate that they feel very safe in school. Their behaviour is good and they demonstrate exceptionally good social skills. They communicate and play together, are polite and welcoming, respecting peers and adults alike. Those with behavioural difficulties learn strategies to help them interact acceptably in public. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the exercise sessions when most get together to 'wake and shake'. At lunchtime, all including the least mobile are encouraged to engage in belly dancing and swimming. After school, the sixth-form students go bowling as part of their extended day. Pupils eat well with healthy snacks of fruit and well-considered midday meals. The Active Mark and Healthy Schools status recognise these outcomes. Outstanding contributions are made to the wider community through, for example, live theatre productions. Recently one pupil made suggestions that led to the school gaining the Eco Award.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<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.

## How effective is the provision?

Overall, teaching and the use of assessments are outstanding. Lessons are very largely well planned with concise learning targets for pupils. Mostly teachers and pupils have very clear expectations of the progress to be made. However, in a very few lessons pupils make slower progress because the indicators of success in the lesson are less well defined and tasks are not matched exactly to individual needs. Classroom assistants provide excellent support for pupils and they are directed well by teachers. Strategies are employed that overcome barriers to pupils' learning, including pictorial communication aids and signing. These improvements are clearly linked to the school's specialist status in cognition and learning. Furthermore, mobility devices ensure that all pupils are fully included. Thus, they can all make valuable contributions and take part in class activities.

The outstanding curriculum ensures that all gain an education matched to their needs, abilities and interests. Individual timetables are prepared and there is great attention to personalisation of pupils' education. In the upper school, this highly inclusive practice ensures that pupils have opportunities to choose courses and vocational placements such as in horse care or horticulture. The curriculum is innovative in nature so that new elements of learning can be devised to persuade pupils to attend and engage. All subjects promote literacy and numeracy and the school ensures that there are clear and

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progressive developments of these throughout. The great range of enrichments occurs during assemblies, through organised events such as trips and visits, at lunchtimes and after school for members of the sixth form, and range from sporting events to residential camps. The fully met expectation is that pupils will participate in activities equivalent to those enjoyed by others in mainstream schools.

Care, guidance and support are great strengths. Staff ensure that pupils are cared for and constantly supported. For example, arrangements with speech and language therapists and others improve access to learning and social communication for many, thus contributing greatly to the outstanding progress made by all groups, to their good behaviour and above-average attendance. Pupils' families greatly appreciate the support provided by the school including that provided by its partners, at points of transition when pupils move on to the next stages of their lives or education. This is especially important as so many join the school at other than the usual times.

*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?

Staff morale is high with a sense of shared purpose. Skilful self-analysis by managers ensures that strengths and weaknesses are known. Consequently, improvement planning is sharply focused. Priorities are tackled and resources directed to great effect such as by using the specialist status to provide outreach services to other schools. Therefore, at the time of the inspection there was no need for an Early Years Foundation Stage. Many pupils are supported at their mainstream schools while others benefit from dual registration through these outstanding partnerships, demonstrating also the school's highly successful commitment to providing equality of opportunity. Newly introduced assessment systems are potentially highly effective. These, together with close monitoring of the curriculum already ensure that all pupils can succeed and no pupils are discriminated against. However, these systems have not yet had an impact on the quality of all teaching. Therefore, the leadership and management of teaching and assessment is good while overall its quality in driving improvement is outstanding.

The good governing body discharges its responsibilities well. It rigorously ensures that all are safe through good-quality risk assessments and other measures. It supports and challenges the school. Many members have been recently appointed but they have already begun to undertake focused training. By regularly monitoring policies and procedures, the governing body ensures that the school demonstrates recommended good practice in all aspects of safeguarding. All in the school have received good-quality training for

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safeguarding. Managers are aware that most pupils are potentially vulnerable so many aspects of the curriculum are designed to help pupils understand how to stay safe.

All adults work together in the best interests of the pupils and their efforts extend to pupils' families and into the community. Local people use the school facilities through the evening classes. Community initiatives raise money for the school indicating that it is well known and respected. The school maintains an appropriate policy and action plan for community cohesion and the overall quality of this aspect is good because the school is analysing further the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its work and relationships.

Through excellent deployment of staff and resources together with a desire to maximise the use of every space available Dorin Park obtains mainly outstanding outcomes for pupils. Consequently, the school provides outstanding value for money.

*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	2
<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>1</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>

## Sixth form

Staff morale is high with a sense of shared purpose. Skilful self-analysis by managers ensures that strengths and weaknesses are known. Consequently, improvement planning is sharply focused. Priorities are tackled and resources directed to great effect such as by using the specialist status to provide outreach services to other schools. Therefore, at the time of the inspection there was no need for an Early Years Foundation Stage. Many pupils are supported at their mainstream schools while others benefit from dual registration through these outstanding partnerships, demonstrating also the school's highly successful commitment to providing equality of opportunity. Newly introduced assessment systems are potentially highly effective. These, together with close monitoring of the curriculum already ensure that all pupils can succeed and no pupils are discriminated against. However, these systems have not yet had an impact on the quality



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All adults work together in the best interests of the pupils and their efforts extend to pupils' families and into the community. Local people use the school facilities through the evening classes. Community initiatives raise money for the school indicating that it is well known and respected. The school maintains an appropriate policy and action plan for community cohesion and the overall quality of this aspect is good because the school is analysing further the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its work and relationships.

Through excellent deployment of staff and resources together with a desire to maximise the use of every space available Dorin Park obtains mainly outstanding outcomes for pupils. Consequently, the school provides outstanding value for money.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school. Around 25% of the returns had additional comments written on to the questionnaires and almost all were very positive about the school and the staff. For example, one parent or carer wrote: 'I have never seen such a committed team. I would not want my child to be anywhere else.' These representations were very much in accordance with the findings of the inspection.

A very few parents or carers raised concerns through their questionnaires about some aspects of the provision and these included relationships with staff, processes associated with care and elements of communication. These concerns were not confirmed during the inspection despite specific investigation by inspectors, but a general overview of them was brought to the attention of the headteacher.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dorin Park School & Specialist Sen College 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	86	5	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	72	8	22	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	58	14	39	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	61	12	33	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	72	5	14	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	61	10	28	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	61	12	33	1	3	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)	19	53	12	33	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	67	10	28	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	50	12	33	2	6	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	64	10	28	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	81	6	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	83	5	14	1	3	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

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"><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 pupils' 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.**



13 April 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Dorin Park School & Specialist SEN College, Chester, CH2 1HD**

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome when we visited Dorin Park recently. We enjoyed meeting you in your lessons and around the school. We were impressed by your regular attendance, polite behaviour and the amount of exercise you take.

Dorin Park staff work very hard. They provide you with an outstanding education and very high quality care. The curriculum and enrichment activities are first class. You make outstanding progress, enjoy your lessons and achieve very well. You feel very safe here. Your contributions in school and the wider community such as in your dramatic performances and links with other institutions are outstanding. Most of you improve your communication skills and many of you gain useful qualifications and experiences in the workplace. You become extremely well equipped for moving on to the next stages of your lives.

The leaders and managers are excellent and well supported by the governing body. Your parents and carers appreciate their efforts in keeping you safe and ensuring that all are fully included in the life of the school. To help your school to get even better, we have asked the managers to make sure that more lessons are outstanding, and that your progress can be followed more closely.

Thank you for your interest in our work. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McKenzie

Lead inspector

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