

# Hinderton School

Capenhurst Lane, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 7AQ

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- From their very low starting points, pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make rapid gains in their literacy, numeracy, and communication skills, and in their personal and social development.
- Teachers have a deep understanding of the needs of pupils with autism and are highly skilled in helping pupils to overcome their anxieties and remain calm. As a result, pupils can concentrate for longer periods of time, work in groups with others, and become increasingly independent in the classroom and around school.
- Meticulous attention to detail in teachers' planning and assessment ensures that each pupil's needs are taken into account in each lesson and that targets are challenging and realistic.
- Excellent team work in classrooms is also a key factor in the outstanding quality of teaching taking place each day.
- The strong emphasis on developing each pupil's ability to communicate in a positive and purposeful way is exceptionally effective in enabling pupils to feel confident to try new activities and take a full part in school life. This also helps them feel safe and secure.
- Excellent work with other professionals ensures that a broad range of advice is used in drawing up individual plans to meet pupils' needs. Some of these plans overlap and the school recognises the value in reviewing their purpose and format to avoid possible duplication and to keep the process workable.
- Arrangements for checking the school's performance, such as tracking pupils' progress, and observing the quality of teaching are robust. Senior leaders and governors maintain an accurate view of strengths and areas for further development.
- Senior leaders have maintained the very high standards found at the last inspection and in their drive for continual improvement have made further changes, such as to the curriculum.
- Significant consistency has been achieved across the school in all aspects of teaching and management of behaviour. This has made a big difference and helped pupils make the excellent progress seen.
- The school is recognised in the authority for its specialist expertise and the excellent outreach it provides to families and other schools.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of nine lessons involving seven teachers and a number of teaching assistants; one of these observations was carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also listened to pupils read in their lessons and spent time making general observations at lunchtimes and throughout the school day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of staff were noted through the 28 responses to the staff questionnaire as well as through informal discussions held with staff during the inspection.
- The views of parents were taken into account through the 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and two letters sent by parents directly to the lead inspector during the inspection.
- Pupils' views were drawn from a meeting with a small group of pupils and informal discussions with individual pupils during lessons, lunchtime and throughout the school day.
- Documents were looked at relating to the curriculum, safeguarding, teachers' planning and assessments, pupils' work, school improvement, the accuracy of how well the school views its own performance, and information available to parents.

## Inspection team

Caroline Broomhead, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Hinderton School is a primary special school located in the Cheshire West local authority area. It provides education for pupils with autism. All have a statement of special educational needs. All pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties and the majority also have severe or moderate learning difficulties.
- About a quarter of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority. This proportion is in line with the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is also below average.
- The school does not use other external education providers.
- The school works in partnership with other special and mainstream schools in the area and is recognised as the lead school for autism in the local authority.

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

- Review the purpose and format of plans drawn up for individual pupils with the aim of reducing the number of different plans in place and avoiding duplication of information and targets.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment when they start at the school is well below that normally expected for their age. Children who join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage have significant development delay.
- During their time at the school, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils elsewhere make at least good and usually outstanding progress in their learning from their starting points, including in literacy, numeracy, communication and language. Most of those in the current Year 6 have progressed at a rate exceeding national expectations when compared with pupils of similar age and starting points. This is because of the highly-skilled teaching taking place on a daily basis across the school.
- The school is exceptionally successful in teaching pupils how to communicate their thoughts, feelings and needs in a positive way, which reduces their anxiety and enables them to focus much better in lessons. It also enables them to learn to manage their own behaviour and remain calm at other times of the day such as at lunchtimes. This is a significant achievement and an important factor in why their progress in lessons is so good.
- The progress and achievement of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is similar to that of others in the school. Each child in the school receives an extremely high level of individual teaching and support which is carefully tailored to their needs and encourages pupils to achieve their potential at the different stages in their school life.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The school's strong focus on developing staff expertise in autism, communication and language and positive approaches to managing behaviour has been central to the school achieving an exceptionally high standard of teaching. Teaching staff have excellent awareness of autism and how it affects learning, behaviour, communication and social interaction.
- Alongside this high level of specialist expertise, teachers are meticulous in their attention to detail when planning their lessons. They give careful thought to the type and location of activities, the resources, the preferred means of communication, and the support each child will need to achieve their individual goals. Teaching staff then ensure that these plans are put into practice in the classroom.
- Class teams, made up of teacher and teaching assistants, are extremely effective. They are fully aware of lesson objectives and each pupil's needs and work in harmony to achieve these. They have high expectations and create a very positive climate for learning in which pupils feel secure and are willing to participate in tasks set for them. Excellent use is made of visual, practical and sensory resources to capture and maintain pupils' interest.
- Pupils understand the well established classroom routines and gradually become more able to tolerate working in groups alongside other children. This is because staff are highly skilled in encouraging pupils to manage their own behaviour, take increasing responsibility for their learning and become less reliant on adult direction.
- Literacy, including reading, numeracy and communication and language skills are taught very effectively throughout the school day.
- Teachers have a detailed and accurate knowledge of how well each pupil is learning and progressing in the small steps towards their goals. Individual targets are precise and carefully monitored. The school is simplifying these, using visual formats, so that pupils can play a more active role and have a better understanding of when they are achieving them. Marking is positive and constructive, letting pupils know what they have done well. Much of the evidence for pupils' learning is in photographic or video format. Pupils are captivated by seeing themselves doing different activities and this material is used very effectively to help pupils to

remember and recall what they have learned before. Pupils are proud of their achievements.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Visitors to the school are struck by the calm and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils greet visitors politely and are keen to show off their school and what they have done in class. Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils themselves are positive and respectful.
- Pupils settle quickly into the daily routines and their willingness to try new activities and accept guidance and instruction from adults speaks volumes about how safe and secure they feel. When asked about bullying, pupils said there is sometimes some 'bickering' and they usually ask a teacher to sort it out if it troubles them.
- The clear structure of lessons is an important factor in helping pupils to know what to expect and this reduces their anxiety. They know that they need to complete the tasks set for them before they can earn a 'choose' activity and they willingly agree to this. They understand the system for getting stars and awards and enjoy the weekly celebration assemblies.
- Pupils generally have a good awareness of each other's need for personal space and are careful in classrooms not to bump into other people. Classrooms are carefully laid out to promote safe movement and to provide areas where pupils can choose to go to for some quiet time. This works extremely well and shows a high level of personal responsibility on the part of pupils when they sensibly choose to use these areas to calm down and then return to main activities when they are ready.
- At lunchtimes, pupils eat together in the dining room. Great care is taken by staff to ensure that each child's dietary needs are catered for. Pupils are supported to become increasingly independent at meal times and to develop their social skills.
- Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety whilst out on visits are rigorous and carefully planned to take account of individual children's needs.
- The exceptionally high level of staff expertise and consistency in practice is at the core of the school's success in achieving outstanding behaviour and safety. Parents are very positive about the school and how well staff care for their children. As one parent said, 'our child is in exceptionally talented and safe hands'.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- Senior leaders set high expectations for all aspects of the school's work. They have maintained high standards seen at the last inspection and ensured that the school has continued to develop.
- This is a dynamic and outward-looking school that is recognised in the local authority for its expertise in the area of autism. It also takes a lead role in collating and analysing pupil performance data for the authority's special schools. The school's relationship with the local authority is one of partnership, with officers encouraging the sharing of best practice between schools. The school's outreach work to families and other schools is highly respected and valued.
- The school has introduced changes since the last inspection to the curriculum, assessment, and tracking of pupils' behaviour and progress. Each of these is designed to provide a sharper focus on the needs of pupils with autism. Senior leaders are getting a clearer view of the effectiveness of these changes and the improvements they are making to pupils' learning, behaviour and communication skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well through all aspects of school life. Pupils take part in a broad range of charitable fundraising activities, such as Food Share, and learn about other cultures through half-termly family celebration events such as the recent one for the Chinese New Year. They enjoy a range of off-site education visits to help them to socialise with people in the wider community.
- When pupils start at the school, a detailed assessment is carried out to identify their education,

behaviour, care, sensory and health needs. This information is used to draw up individual plans for meeting those needs in the classroom and throughout the school day. These plans are reviewed regularly and amended where necessary. However, each child has a number of different plans and some targets are repeated, and could lead to unnecessary duplication of recording and monitoring. Senior leaders are keen for these to be realistic and working documents and agree with the inspector that a review of the purpose and format of these plans is timely.

- The staff are highly professional and clearly committed to giving each child every opportunity to succeed at school. They take steps to ensure that pupils are safe, well looked after, and as far as possible, happy. The school works closely with families to achieve this. The improvement in attendance, which is now above average, is an example of the effectiveness of this relationship.
- The excellent partnerships with other professionals, for instance in speech and language and occupational therapy, play an important part in ensuring that teaching and support are closely aligned to pupils' needs.
- Staff are supportive of the school. They are keen to develop their expertise and they take full advantage of the opportunities and support offered by the school to undertake further training and gain advanced qualifications.
- Senior leaders have robust systems in place for checking on the quality of teaching and the performance of individual teachers aligned to the teachers' standards. Training is tailored to individual development needs as well as school improvement priorities, with a strong focus on building specialist expertise within the school. As a result, the excellent standard of teaching seen at the last inspection has been maintained and pupils make rapid gains in their learning during their time at the school.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths, and have identified the priorities for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have continued to provide effective support and challenge since the last inspection. They ensure that safeguarding is given high priority and meets statutory requirements. The well established committee structure enables governors to keep a close check on matters such as finance, personnel and safeguarding and to hold the school to account. Governors are kept well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and understand the links between teachers' effectiveness and salary progression. They are committed to ensuring that each child, including pupils receiving premium funding, has an equal chance to do well at school.

## What inspection judgements mean

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

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111510
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	408912

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	35
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Hopwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liam Dowling
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 338 2200
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 356 8765
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