

# Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School

Crossacres Road, Peel Hall, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M22 5DR

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress given their age and starting point.
- They make good progress in developing reading, writing and communication skills, and in mathematics.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in their social development and in becoming more independent.
- Most lessons are of good or outstanding quality. Teaching assistants provide very valuable support.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in their behaviour. They try really hard and have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Staff care for pupils very well. Pupils feel very safe at school.
- The school is well led by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. They are supported very well by the whole staff team, and by governors to continually improve the school.
- The curriculum is good and rightly places an emphasis on communication, literacy and mathematics, as well as pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are very pleased with the school and would recommend it to others.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of pupils who make more than expected progress is smaller than would be the case for achievement to be judged as outstanding.
- Signing is not used consistently to support communication development.
- A small proportion of lessons are not always organised and monitored effectively to ensure pupils to learn as well as they can.
- Parents are not as involved as they could be in their children's learning.
- School improvement planning does not always identify clearly enough how learning will be improved.

## Information about this inspection

- Thirteen lessons were observed and pupils' learning and progress were also evaluated by looking at their work and through case studies.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, teachers and teaching assistants.
- The views of staff were obtained through a questionnaire completed by 47 staff.
- Pupils' views were gained from a meeting with a small group. The views of parents were obtained from 16 responses to the Parent View (an online survey of their views), one parent who asked to speak with inspectors and from the school's own annual survey of parents' views.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's data about pupils' progress and behaviour, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and the school's monitoring of teaching.

## Inspection team

Charlie Henry, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gary Kirkley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Ashgate Specialist Primary Support School meets a wide range of disabilities and special educational needs, including severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are undergoing statutory assessment. The school also provides outreach support to other primary schools in the locality.
- The school has very recently moved into refurbished premises that are attached to a mainstream primary school. This move has also resulted in a significant increase in pupil numbers and classes.
- The school serves Wythenshawe and South Manchester. Both of these districts have been identified as areas of high social deprivation.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding provided by the government to support particular groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those of service families) is high. A very high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals; very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and an average yet increasing number who have English as an additional language.
- Eighty per cent of pupils are boys.
- The school has achieved a gold award in the Healthy School programme and the Active Mark recognition for physical education.

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

- Increase the proportion of pupils who make more than expected progress for their age and starting points by:
  - ensuring lesson organisation matches well with the intended learning outcomes for each pupil
  - closely monitoring the learning of all pupils so that further guidance can be provided to teaching assistants where this is needed
  - using signing consistently in all aspects of school life for pupils for whom this is an important part of their communication development
  - increasing pupils' involvement in evaluating how well they are learning and in suggesting ways how they can do even better
  - improving parents' involvement in their children's learning through increased sharing of communication development and other learning activities that can be used at home.
- Ensure improvement planning identifies clearly the intended improvements in pupils' learning and use this information to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions that are taken.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils make at least the progress expected for their age and starting point. A significant proportion of pupils make more progress than expected, however, this proportion is smaller than needed for a judgement of outstanding achievement.
- Parents are rightly pleased with the progress that their children make.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their communication and literacy skills, including reading, and their numeracy skills. They make exceptional progress in developing social skills. Pupils of all ages carry out responsibilities in their class, such as giving out and collecting resources, enthusiastically and effectively. They become more independent and think carefully when making choices.
- Pupils have equal opportunity to achieve well. There are no significant differences in the progress made by pupils of different ages, from different ethnic backgrounds, in different subjects or with different disabilities and special educational needs. Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium progress as well as other pupils; some make more progress than other pupils.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make equally good progress as older pupils.
- Pupils involved in special approaches to improve their progress do well. This includes those pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and take part in nurture groups, and those who are on an intensive reading programme where they have been identified as underachieving in this area of their learning.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Most lessons are good or outstanding. Lesson observations undertaken jointly with senior leaders provided inspectors with confidence that the school has an accurate picture of the quality of teaching.
- The teaching of literacy and communication, and numeracy is good. Lessons are well planned and based on an accurate understanding of pupils' levels of attainment. Expectations for what they can do, therefore, are challenging yet realistic. The use of signing for pupils who need this means of communication is, however, not consistent. While it is generally used well for the direct teaching of new pieces of work, it is not used sufficiently at all other times.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are particularly knowledgeable about the implications for learning of their pupils' disabilities and special educational needs, especially those with autistic spectrum disorders and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. For example, pupils are prepared very carefully for a change from one activity to the next where this can cause anxiety and possible problems.
- All staff show very high levels of care and respect for their pupils. These are shown, for example, as they talk and explain to the pupils when carrying out any personal care tasks, place them in standing frames or move them around in their wheelchairs.
- Feedback to pupils on how well they have done in a lesson is effective and helps them understand how to learn or behave even better. Occasionally, pupils are not as involved in evaluating their own performance as much as they could be and suggesting how they can improve still further.
- Teaching assistants contribute very well to the quality of pupils' learning. Teamwork between teachers and their assistants is strong.
- Occasionally, lesson organisation is too rigid and follows the same pattern for all lessons. For example, always starting with the teacher talking to the whole class, without considering carefully if this is the most effective approach for the intended learning. Similarly, teachers do not always check closely enough the learning of all of pupils when they are working with assistants to see if further guidance is required.

- Parents are very happy with the quality of teaching. Inspectors agree with parents that teachers could involve them more in their children's learning to build on the progress made at school.

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

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning. They try very hard and are enthusiastic learners. They are polite and courteous to staff and to one another.
- Pupils with particular behavioural difficulties, including where these are associated, for example, with an autistic spectrum disorder, make very good improvements. Even though a few continue to show anxiety and challenge, these occasions reduce substantially over time, as a result of the high level of consistency in the strategies used by all of the staff.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very effective indeed in their very positive and calm approach to improving behaviour. As a result, pupils become more able to manage their own behaviour. Any inappropriate language is immediately challenged and pupils are guided to use more appropriate words.
- Staff use praise and rewards very successfully and their detailed knowledge of their pupils enables them to anticipate and prevent difficulties escalating. Pupils shine when they are given responsibilities. They value highly the 'smiley faces' and stickers given to them when they work hard and behave well.
- The school has been especially successful in maintaining high standards of behaviour during the disruption caused by its change of premises and increase in pupil numbers.
- School leaders monitor behaviour very closely and use this information to inform further improvements.
- While pupils told inspectors of occasional instances of bullying and unkindness by other pupils, they know that these will be dealt with very effectively when they tell an adult. Similarly, parents are confident of the school's approach to such occasions. Pupils understand e-safety at a level appropriate for their age and attainment, for example, that the need to be careful not to give out personal information when using the internet or texting.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully built on the well-established strengths of the school. They are supported very effectively by other members of the leadership team and the entire school staff. The school is understandably held in very high regard by parents. One parent spoke to inspectors about the school's 'open-door' attitude and that staff were always there to help, always had time to speak and were unfailingly positive.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies clearly its strengths and areas for further improvement. Improvement planning is not sharp enough because it is not always clear how the planned actions will improve pupils' learning and progress.
- Pupils' progress is monitored carefully and evaluated against national expectations. The school's data on pupils' attainment is moderated effectively within the school and by working with other schools in the area.
- The curriculum is good and places appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, communication and numeracy skills. The school's work is especially successful in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning. There is a very effective partnership approach to extend arts, culture and creative education.
- Performance management of staff is very good. Information from the observation of teaching is used alongside that obtained from monitoring pupils' progress, in order to identify training needs for the whole school or for individual members of staff. Subsequent lesson observations focus on these development areas to ensure they have been met and that teaching has improved. Senior leaders are addressing the few remaining inconsistencies in teaching. External support is used

effectively to moderate the accuracy of the school's own judgements on the quality of lessons.

- There are effective links with parents and they feel their views are valued highly. The annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs provide an opportunity for parents to provide feedback on the child's education and to rate the school overall. This feedback is very positive and is consistent with the views provided to Parent View. In addition, the school consults with parents on specific topics, such as how best to provide them with information.
- The local authority has regular links with the school and has an accurate picture of its effectiveness and on parents' views about the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body provides an effective strategic lead for the school. It has been particularly effective in contributing to the development of the new premises and decisions to extend the provision for pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Governors have a good grasp of the strengths of the school and areas that require further improvement. They understand the detailed information they are provided with by senior leaders about pupils' progress and behaviour and the quality of teaching. They know that the additional funding is used effectively to improve the progress of those pupils eligible for the pupil premium. They provide effective challenge to the school for its performance, and contribute knowledgeably to discussions about improvement planning. Governors' understanding of the school's performance is also used well in decisions about the performance management of staff. The headteacher's performance is reviewed in accordance with regulations. Statutory responsibilities are met, including required recruitment checks and staff training to ensure that children are safeguarded.

## 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>	127802
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	402410

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>	81
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Blowey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Diane Wolstenholme
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 219 6642
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 436 4793
<b>Email address</b>	admin@ashgate.manchester.sch.uk



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