

Longford Park School

74 Cromwell Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 8QJ

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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.

- Pupils settle quickly when they arrive at this school because they feel safe and exceptionally well supported. From starting points which are well below those expected for their age, almost all pupils, including those who are most able and those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, make rapid progress in their academic and personal development.
- Occasionally pupils do not develop their independent learning skills as well as they might. The school is aware of this and has invested in new technology for use in the classrooms although its use is still at an early stage of development.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. All teaching is now at least good with a majority that is outstanding.
- Teachers ensure new learning takes place in all lessons and plan activities which are extremely well-matched to the abilities of individual pupils.
- Teaching assistants make a hugely significant contribution to pupils' academic progress and to their social and emotional development. Their highly positive attitudes to managing behaviour ensure learning takes place effectively in all lessons.
- Pupils quickly develop vastly improved attitudes to their learning. Very good behaviour in lessons contributes to pupils' improved achievements, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school offers an outstanding curriculum which is exceptionally well-matched to the needs and interests of pupils. It is particularly strong in the areas of creative arts and sports, in which pupils excel.
- Senior leaders have maintained the very high standards and achievement found at the previous inspection. The headteacher leads a highly competent team of senior and middle leaders and an extremely committed governing body, all of whom have contributed outstandingly well to continued school improvement.
- The school is very highly regarded by other schools in the local authority. The provision of outreach advice is very welcome and the work of the service helps to maintain pupils in their settings or contributes to highly effective transfers to and from Longford Park.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed seven lessons, one of which was a paired observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, members of the outreach team, the headteacher and deputy headteacher of a neighbouring primary school, a local authority officer, the school's improvement partner, members of the governing body and a group of pupils. Informal discussions were also held with staff and pupils around the school and in various activities.
- Both inspectors accompanied outreach staff on visits to other schools.
- The inspectors took account of views expressed in the school's own parent questionnaires but there were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be able to take them into account. Responses in 14 staff questionnaires returned were also reviewed.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress, records of behaviour, enrichment activities, school self-evaluation and improvement planning, performance management of teachers and the work of the outreach team.
- On the first morning of the inspection, all pupils were involved in watching a performance by an outside theatre group.

Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Longford Park School provides for primary-age pupils from across the Trafford local authority who have a statement of special educational needs for social, emotional and behaviour difficulties or who are in the process of statutory assessment. A minority of pupils attend on part-time placements in partnership with other schools and with support from Longford Park's outreach team.
- The outreach team currently works with 49 primary schools, on behalf of the local authority, to provide advice and guidance in managing pupils presenting with behaviour difficulties. The team also provides support to pupils who are transferring in or out of Longford Park School.
- The proportion of pupils who present with additional disabilities and special educational needs such as attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum conditions, speech, language and communication difficulties and other complex needs has been increasing over the last few years.
- About three-quarters of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is exceptionally high. Pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average.
- Although children who are at the Early Years Foundation Stage are occasionally admitted on request of the local authority, there were no children at this stage at the time of the inspection.
- At any time there are only a very small minority of girls in the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are both new to their posts since the previous inspection.
- Longford Park School was awarded 'special school of the year' at the national Pupil Premium Awards in London in July 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' achievement by developing their independent enquiry through increased use of technology in the classroom.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils arrive at Longford Park at any stage in their schooling and at any time of the year, with attainment generally well below that expected for their age. An increasing number of pupils present with complex additional needs which have been barriers to learning and have contributed to pupils' difficulties and failed placements in the past.
- Although there were no children at the Early Years Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection, the few pupils at Key Stage 1 benefit from a curriculum which is exceptionally well planned for younger children and which helps them to develop early learning skills and knowledge they may have missed in previous settings. This enables these pupils to be more prepared for learning as they move through the school or occasionally transfer to other settings.
- Rates of progress are impressive. During their time in the school, pupils make at least good progress and an increasing majority make outstanding progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The excellent progress they make enables a minority of pupils to return to mainstream schools with support from the outreach team, or to move to their local high school when they leave Longford Park. Overall attainment is often at or around national expectations in English and mathematics.
- The school is outstandingly successful in helping pupils to develop their communication skills so that they can express their needs and wishes in a positive way. Pupils can attend the nurturing environment of the breakfast club or one of a range of physical activities when they arrive at school in the morning, all designed to help pupils be ready to learn.
- Many make great strides forward in reading because teachers make learning letters and sounds enjoyable and provide pupils with the skills needed to make sense of the written word. Similarly, in writing, many learn to express their ideas following a clear sequence because teachers provide helpful support that encourages them to plan and think out their ideas.
- Mathematics is taught exceptionally well, using lots of practical applications, so that pupils can see the importance of what they are learning and begin to be able to apply it to real-life situations.
- Pupils acquire the essential skills in using information and communication technology. However, pupils are not always able to undertake their own independent research using technology because resources have only recently become available in all classrooms and are not yet used as effectively as they might be.
- The school has impressively high expectations for all its pupils, ensuring they are all given an equal opportunity to enjoy success. This includes those who are most able, with one pupil passing the grammar school entrance examination this year.
- Those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are in the majority in the school, those who are in the care of the local authority, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, reach similar levels of attainment as other pupils and progress just as well, and often better, than others. Pupil premium is used so effectively that the school was awarded national special school of the year at the Pupil Premium Awards.
- The very small minority of girls make the same progress as the boys. They enjoy quality time with a teaching assistant to meet their particular needs and interests and one pupil took a starring role in a dramatization of the life of Rosa Parks when the class was studying apartheid.
- The school places a strong emphasis on creative arts and sports to help build self-confidence. Pupils thoroughly enjoy participating in team sports, in musical activities such as the brass band, reading their performance poems about snakes or performing in an ambitious production of 'Romeo and Juliet' watched attentively by the rest of the school. The resulting rise in their self-esteem and, therefore, in their personal as well as academic development, ensures pupils are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage in their school lives.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils achieve exceptionally well because the quality of teaching is outstanding. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection with a higher proportion each year being judged outstanding by senior leaders and independent observers.
- The outreach team provides highly effective support for learning to pupils in mainstream schools and, where a move in or out of Longford Park is appropriate, the very experienced staff prepare these pupils extremely well for transfer, which helps them to settle quickly.
- Teachers are very aware of the needs of the younger pupils and provide a lively and stimulating environment and resources to enable children and younger pupils to learn and explore through play as well as in more structured activities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants understand the needs of the pupils extremely well. Teachers plan very ambitious but highly-structured activities which enable pupils to make small steps of learning and enjoy success. Tasks are exceptionally well-matched to the learning needs and abilities of individual pupils. As a result each pupil is able to make the best possible progress they can.
- Lessons move briskly and pupils clearly enjoy their learning. They are proud to tell what they already know. For example, in a science lesson, pupils could say that camels have long eyelashes to keep the sand out of their eyes and monkeys have long fingers to grip branches and peel fruit. By skilful questioning the teacher was quickly able to assess prior knowledge and move on to introduce new learning.
- Lessons are planned carefully to give pupils opportunities to extend their literacy and numeracy skills through all subjects. For instance, 'play to learn' has been introduced into sports lessons where pupils might practise their five times table by bouncing a ball while counting 5, 10, 15 and so on.
- Teachers and teaching assistants remind pupils gently about the rules in lessons. Pupils take turns, listen carefully and learn not to call out. They are encouraged to self-evaluate what they have learned and to evaluate the work of other pupils. This is not an easy task for these pupils and it was pleasing to see how positive and respectful they are of each other. Teachers use pupils' own evaluations together with extremely high quality marking to inform pupils how to improve their work and to plan following lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils usually arrive at Longford Park with low self-esteem and little confidence. The very strong, trusting relationships they develop with staff help them to settle very quickly and develop highly positive attitudes in lessons.
- The very positive approach to behaviour by all staff means there is an expectation throughout the school that it will not be a barrier to learning. Staff are very observant and quickly identify if a pupil is having difficulty. They are so skilled in managing behaviour highly effectively that pupils quickly settle to work again with no disruption to the learning of others. The therapeutic department provides exceptional support to pupils who need some time out of the classroom or the opportunity to talk with a friendly and sympathetic carer about things which are worrying them.
- There is a clear focus on promoting positive behaviour so that negative behaviours quickly reduce. Pupils love to work for rewards such as certificates, cups and even vouchers for sustained good work or behaviour and are proud to receive these at weekly assemblies.
- Older pupils happily take on responsibilities such as sports leaders and playground buddies. They are proud of their achievements in school and say they feel exceptionally safe and well-cared for. They truly believe the school has made a positive difference in their lives and want to give something back by contributing to fundraising or by working with children with severe learning difficulties in a partner school.
- Pupils say bullying is rare but trust staff to deal with any issues. The school has introduced a

restorative justice approach and this is beginning to be effective in defusing and resolving any disputes. Pupils develop strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They respect each other, congratulate their successes and look after their school environment. Work in books and on displays demonstrates their wish to do their best and produce work they can be proud of.

- The school is a calm and happy place where highly effective learning takes place. Pupils want to come to school and attendance levels are above the national average and well above similar schools.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers at all levels show a strong commitment to ensuring all pupils do as well as possible during their time in the school. Future actions are based on a very clear understanding of how well the school is doing and actions are prompt and precise. The success of this is in the overall excellent progress pupils make and their ability to make full use of all that is provided for them.
- Since taking up his post, the headteacher has continued to drive improvement in this already successful school. The role of middle leaders is now well-developed. They monitor their areas of responsibility extremely well and have an in-depth knowledge of the work of teachers and progress of pupils.
- Monitoring of progress is meticulous and staff have a very clear understanding of how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing. Support for pupils' many and varied needs are accurately targeted to where it is most needed. As a result, pupils' achievements are also improving.
- Teaching is checked very closely. Rigorous performance management has driven up standards in the quality of teaching, which is now never less than good and with a majority which is outstanding.
- Behaviour improves because the curriculum captures pupils' interests and meets their needs extremely well. Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through topics in class, on cultural visits, activity holidays, and in sports and the arts. The headteacher and his deputy firmly believe that the development of good communication skills is crucial. They ensure opportunities are provided to promote speaking and listening, empathy and respect for others through the curriculum. This is enhanced by a partnership with the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, where pupils watch productions, go to workshops, participate in performances and contribute art work for displays.
- Sports funding is used effectively to provide a wide range of activities and ensure teachers' skills are enhanced so that these activities will continue in the school.
- Parents love to come to sports events and productions and are proud of their children's achievements. The staff, outreach team and parent-support advisor work highly collaboratively with a range of other agencies so that parents feel exceptionally well-supported and well-informed about how well their children are doing.
- Senior leaders value partnerships with other special and mainstream schools to benchmark their work and learn from each other. The outreach service to provide advice and guidance to other schools and to support pupils in and out of Longford Park is very highly regarded by the local authority. As a lead officer commented, 'It is a very special, special school.' and not surprisingly the local authority feels the need to provide only light touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There has been some recent re-organisation of the governing body and governors are developing links into school to ensure new governors understand the provision at first hand. Governors challenge and question information extremely well and keep a very close check on matters such as finance, personnel and safeguarding in order to hold the school's leaders to account. Governors are kept well-informed about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and monitor the links between performance management and pay. They ensure pupil

premium and the primary sports funding are used effectively to close gaps and provide additional opportunities to pupils. Equal opportunities is at the heart of all the school does and governors, together with school leaders, are wholly committed to ensuring the school continues to grow and improve to provide every pupil with the best possible chance to succeed.

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

Unique reference number	106392
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	426273

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sam Martin
Headteacher	Andrew Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2010
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