

Grange School

Matthews Lane, Longsight, Manchester, M12 4GR

Inspection dates

4–5 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in personal and communication skills. This means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
- The majority of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. They apply what they have learned in these subjects.
- Teaching is good and this is a significant improvement from the last inspection. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
- Pupils work very hard to live up to the high expectations set for them to ensure that their behaviour is good.
- Pupils show they feel safe and well cared for. This is because staff ensure that each pupil's individual needs are met very well.
- The sixth form is good. Students are well prepared for leaving school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their learning. This is because it is well organised and partnership with families is strong.
- The leadership has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Senior leaders have clear plans to ensure that everyone works together as a team to improve pupils' achievement. All staff are helped to improve their teaching and this is supporting continuous school improvement.
- The governing body makes a good contribution to the school's leadership because they ensure that the actions they take always contribute to their clear expectations and vision for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, pupils do not make good enough progress in lessons because the targets set for them are not challenging enough.
- Information from checks on how well pupils are doing is not always used to identify what they need to do next.
- The role of the middle leaders is not yet fully developed to enable them to monitor the quality of teaching extensively and have a sharp enough focus on the progress made by pupils.
- A few parents do not feel fully informed about how well their children are achieving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, of which three were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors made short visits, in the form of learning walks, to 10 lessons with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read in lessons and examined pupils' work in files and books.
- The inspectors took account of the school's procedures for safeguarding. They looked at the school development plan, leaders' evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, curriculum and lesson planning, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers, and documents that track pupils' academic and personal progress.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff and a telephone call was made to a member of the local authority. A discussion was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of inspection questionnaires returned by 46 members of staff, together with the school's own surveys of the views of pupils, parents and staff. There were 18 responses to Parent View (the on-line questionnaire for parents).
- A second deputy headteacher was appointed in December 2013. Some new appointments to the middle leadership team have just been made.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marylin Massey	Additional Inspector
David Halford	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have autism. A small minority of pupils has learning difficulties and a few have either additional behavioural difficulties or complex needs. A large proportion of pupils accesses mental health services.
- The majority of pupils is boys.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding in order to raise achievement further by ensuring that:
 - the targets set for pupils always build on assessments made so that they are always sufficiently challenging
 - information gathered from checks on pupils' progress is always used to plan what they should do next
 - the outstanding practice already available in the school is shared.
- Strengthen the role of the middle leaders so that they make a full contribution to monitoring and improving pupil progress and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inform parents more fully of all that the school does, so they can feel confident in the good work being done.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils are working at levels lower than expected nationally when they join the school as a result of their disabilities and special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils make good progress. Compared to pupils nationally with similar starting points, the proportion of pupils who make better than the progress expected of them compares favourably with that found nationally, although their standards are still below national expectations when they leave.
- The vast majority of pupils make good or better progress in personal development and life skills. This means that the majority of pupils are able to make good progress in English and mathematics, because they are increasingly able to apply themselves well in lessons.
- Pupils may start at the school at any age, although more pupils begin attending either in the Early Years Foundation Stage or in Year 7. Pupils accelerate their progress when they begin attending the school as a result of arrangements in place to ensure a calm and stress-free classroom space.
- Pupils' progress is notably swift in Key Stage 2. This is because pupils have been taught well in this key stage over time.
- Progress in using and applying number skills is a strength because of emphasis placed on this in the curriculum.
- Children in the Early Years make a good start because areas inside and outside are well organised and there is a good partnership with parents.
- Students in the Sixth Form make good progress because their complex needs are catered for very closely. The opportunity to gain qualifications, follow work placements and practise life skills have a good impact on their achievement.
- Students in Key Stage 4 made good progress this year because they were carefully assessed and grouped, so that they could gain a wide range of appropriate qualifications.
- However, school data show that pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 3 made slower progress over the key stage, especially the less able. This is as a result of less robust assessment in the past, on which insufficiently challenging targets were set.
- A small minority of parents who responded thought that their children did not make good progress. Inspectors agree that this was the case in the past.
- Achievement in reading is good, especially for pupils eligible for the additional funding. This is as a result of carefully targeted support and the addition of a library.
- Primary school sport funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are used to good effect to support eligible pupils' learning and progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has risen sharply since the last inspection and continues to improve. It is good overall, with some that is outstanding. Teaching typically enables most pupils to make good progress and occasionally to make outstanding progress in personal and life skills, because staff are skilled in creating and maintaining a positive climate for learning.
- Lessons include students applying their personal and social skills as well as applying their English and mathematics skills. As a result, students often concentrate for long periods and make good progress in school subjects.
- The teaching of communication is a strength, because staff have expert knowledge in developing communication through the use of symbols. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to encourage pupils to develop and apply their skills. Staff use signed communication with the minority of pupils, usually in the Early Years or Sixth Form to promote their understanding.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to the achievement of the pupils through good support, for example by working closely with individual pupils.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, because staff make sure that children make a confident transition from home to school. This is because they work well with families and establish the basis of good shared assessment of children's progress.
- Teaching in the Sixth Form is good because students apply skills in an increasingly wide range of adult situations. This prepares them well for when they leave school.
- Occasionally, targets set sometimes overemphasise personal development at the expense of developing subject skills and understanding. This is because the now good assessment has not always been used as the basis of what the student should do next in that subject. As a result, some opportunities to deepen knowledge are missed.
- A small minority of parents who responded do not agree strongly that their children are well taught or that they are given sufficient information about their child's progress. The school knows that this was the case in the past and has arranged two parents' consultation meetings this year.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Students are curious. They are keen to give adults information in response to questions. They try exceptionally hard to live up to the high expectations set for them. For example in 'Lego Therapy' they come to terms with working in succession with another pupil to achieve a model together.
- Staff are skilled in maintaining a positive atmosphere at all times. This is because they use techniques to ensure that students are calm and stress free, for example, by designing the classroom so that it offers the correct level of stimulation or speaking in a quiet voice.
- Well established routines make a significant contribution to a few students, resulting in remarkable improvements in their behaviour. Pupils understand about bullying well. They say bullying is rare and any problems are dealt with, so it is not an issue.
- The school's procedures to keep pupils safe and secure are good.
- Pupils show they feel safe as a result of the clear, strong relationships between staff and pupils. Others say they feel safe and describe the school as 'awesome', because the level of trust given to each individual is exactly right.
- Students learn to keep themselves and others safe when they are out in the community. For example, they understand that they must wait and look for traffic before crossing the road. Careful, robust risk assessments are made when pupils go on residential or on a trip, for example to London.
- Attendance is average as pupils attend when they can.
- The large majority of parents who responded on Parent View agree that their children are happy and safe here.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a highly effective leader. He is persistent in his ambition for the school and has had a considerable impact on school improvement over a short period of time. He is ably supported by the deputy headteachers.
- The leadership of teaching and performance is very effective. Procedures to check the quality of teaching are in place. However, the headteacher knows that the role of the middle leaders is not yet sufficiently developed to enable them to have a sharp focus on, and contribute more to pupil progress, when monitoring the quality of learning. There is a suitable link between teachers' performance and their progression along the pay scales.
- The school's system for keeping an eye on how well pupils are doing is well organised. This ensures that any pupil at risk of underachieving is identified and support is put in place to remove any barriers to learning. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every pupil

has an equal opportunity.

- Staff work increasingly well together as a team. A few have yet to understand and feel comfortable with necessary improvement changes, but most staff now share their ideas about the best ways to ensure that pupils achieve as much as they can.
- Leaders ensure that additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are used to good effect by providing additional opportunities for eligible pupils. It is clear that the funding is making a positive difference.
- Leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the sixth form successfully ensure that the entitlement to an age-appropriate experience is in place. Appropriate emphasis is given to progress in English and mathematics, and to preparing older pupils for the next stage of their education through advice and guidance.
- The school has a very accurate view of its own performance. Improvement plans are very effective because they are detailed, linked to training, and reviewed carefully. They reflect the expectations and strong clear vision of the leaders.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because pupils are able to reflect during celebrations, meditation, 4D sensory and musical experiences and they enjoy kind warm relationships.
- The school's range of subjects and other activities meet the needs of the pupils increasingly well. Learning is enriched by special focus days, visits and residential experiences, and gives priority to meeting the health, communication and learning needs of the pupils.
- Partnerships are well developed: that with the health service personnel makes a good contribution to pupils' well-being. The school makes a good contribution to the teaching of pupils with autism in other schools through the advice it gives to mainstream staff.
- The local authority knows the school well and targets support effectively. The local authority advice to the governors has contributed to the management performance of the headteacher in being very effective in driving school improvement.
- Partnership with parents is good overall, although some parents are not fully aware of the good work of the school and of the excellent progress being made in some areas.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body contributes well to the leadership of the school. Governors gain first-hand evidence through the involvement they have with pupils, parents and staff. They hold leaders to account for the progress of the pupils and school improvement, based on good information. Governors manage the budget effectively and make sure that all safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet requirements. They are clear about how the pupil premium, primary school sport funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are being spent and can identify the positive effect these are having on eligible pupils. Governors are fully included in information about how well teachers are performing, and know about the quality of teaching and how this links to pay.

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	105622
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	442338

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	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Rhodes
Headteacher	Keith Cox
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2012
Telephone number	0161 231 2590
Fax number	0161 231 2417
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