

Hope School

Kelvin Grove, Marus Bridge, Wigan, WN3 6SP

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2014

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 make excellent progress in their personal and communication skills. This means that they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
- The majority of pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics. They use the skills they learn in a wide variety of situations.
- Teaching is outstanding overall and never less than good. This has been maintained over the long period of time since the last inspection. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' progress.
- Pupils work very hard to live up to the high expectations that their behaviour is always the best it can be.
- Pupils show and say they feel safe and cared for well. This is because staff ensure that each pupil's individual needs are met very well.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students are well prepared for leaving school because transition arrangements to the next stage are outstanding.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start to their learning. This is because provision is very well organised and interesting and the partnership with families is strong.
- Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Many staff help other schools to learn from the outstanding practice evident at this school.
- All senior leaders have clear effective systems and procedures to ensure that everyone works together as a team to improve pupils' achievement. All staff are helped to keep the quality of their teaching at a high level.
- The governing body makes a very significant contribution to the school's leadership, because they make plans which impact very well on pupils' achievement and continuous school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which three were observed jointly with the headteacher or a senior member of staff. Inspectors made short visits to 12 lessons, of which eight were with the headteacher, in the form of learning walks.
- 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 44 members of staff together with the school's own surveys of the views of pupils, parents and staff. There were 14 responses to Parent View (the on-line questionnaire for parents).

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Ellwood	Additional Inspector
Paul Edmondson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have learning difficulties. About a half have profound and multiple learning difficulties, the majority of whom have medical difficulties or complex needs. An increasing proportion of pupils have autism.
- The majority of pupils are boys.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A children's centre and provision for young people with profound and complex learning difficulties aged between 19 and 25, form part of the organisation.
- The children's centre building incorporates a community library and a multi-sensory studio classroom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- There are no specific areas set for improvement as the school has a deep and accurate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and acts on this information rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- 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. Although by the time pupils leave the school their attainment is below average, the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is high, compared with the national average.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development and life skills. This means that the vast majority of pupils are able to make outstanding progress in English and mathematics, because they are increasingly able to communicate their needs and wishes and apply their skills, so that they become as independent as they can.
- 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 who start at an early age usually have complex needs and an increasing number have autism. Pupils who start in Year 7 are often more able and as such, have relatively higher starting points. However, no matter what their ability, pupils make rapid progress towards achieving as much independence as possible, given their capabilities.
- Meticulous and robust assessment is the cornerstone of each individual pupil's sustained and rapid achievement. Class staff teams respond quickly to the frequent evaluation of progress by adjusting teaching, so that tasks and activities set are almost always exactly right to enable pupils to make the maximum progress.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make particularly excellent progress, because their care and medical needs are carried out seamlessly, so no time is lost for learning.
- The growing number of pupils with autism do well because staff have made a rapid response to meeting their needs, as a result of their commitment to extensive training.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start because teaching areas inside and outside, are creative and well organised, and there are excellent transition arrangements when children start school.
- Students in the sixth form make excellent progress because staff have high expectations and students are ambitious as a result. The opportunity to gain qualifications, follow work placements and practise life skills, have a significant impact on their achievement.
- Achievement in writing for the most-able pupils is excellent. These pupils make rapid progress in reading and writing words and sentences because staff are well trained and they make sure pupils are given many opportunities to write.
- Achievement in reading is good, especially for pupils supported by any additional funding, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. These pupils often outperform their peers in either English or mathematics. This is as a result of carefully targeted support and the good use made of the community library.
- The primary school sport funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are used to good effect to support eligible pupils' learning and progress.
- All parents who responded on Parent View strongly agree that their children make excellent progress. Inspectors agree that this is the case.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching has been maintained at a high level since the previous inspection. It is never less than good and much is outstanding. Teaching typically enables most pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development, because teachers are enthusiastic and work with a high level of expertise to promote pupils' communication skills.
- Staff know, understand and meet the needs of each individual pupil very well. For example, they use photographs or symbols, signed communication or information and communication technology (ICT) based communication aids, depending upon which system suits the needs of

the pupils at that time.

- The integration of the nursery with mainstream provision provides many opportunities for children to play and learn together. This, coupled with the well-organised, focused activities available to meet the specific needs of all children, has a significantly positive impact on achievement.
- Teams of staff in classrooms work very well together to ensure that there is a smooth transition between activities. As a result, no time is lost and a suitably swift pace of learning is consistently maintained.
- Teaching assistants contribute exceptionally well to the achievement of the pupils through good teaching and support, for example, through teaching groups or by working closely with individual pupils.
- The use of assessment is very strong. All staff observe each pupil carefully and comment about pupils' achievement regularly. They skilfully adapt teaching in response to their observations and this means that pupils move on at a fast pace.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make excellent progress because teachers ensure that learning involves enjoyable and intense sensory experiences. The studio classroom is a place which staff use exceptionally well to take pupils, for example, on an imaginary trip to India.
- Older pupils increasingly use their skills in English and mathematics in functional contexts, such as running the community café. As a result, students concentrate for long periods and consolidate what they have learned.
- Students in the sixth form develop their independence even further, because they apply skills in an increasingly wide range of adult situations, such as supervising in playgroups and studying in other schools and colleges. This prepares them very well for when they leave school.
- All parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are very well taught and they are given good information about their child's progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Students are curious about what unfamiliar adults are doing in the school. They are keen to volunteer information and respond to questions. They try exceptionally hard to live up to the high expectations set for them, for example, by lowering their voice or lifting their arm to press a switch.
- Staff are very skilled in managing behaviour and maintaining a positive atmosphere at all times. This is because they understand exactly what is required to meet the needs of pupils. For example, they may use yoga techniques or sensory physical activities at the beginning of the day to ensure that pupils are settled before they start work.
- Routines to carry out medical, health and care needs are so smooth that the impact they have on interrupting learning is minimal.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say or show they feel safe through their demeanour. This is as a result of the warm, strong relationships between staff and pupils. One pupil said she felt safe and very well cared for, because her needs were met fantastically well.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe when they are out in the community. For example, they understand that they must take care and look for traffic when undertaking independent travel. Older students in the sixth form know what safety features they must look for when they select toys for young children.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and all attend when they can.
- All parents who responded on Parent View strongly agree that their children are happy, very well cared for and extremely safe at this school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has been a highly effective leader over a long period of time. The very effective partnership with the deputy headteacher has ensured that all of the school's work has been maintained at the highest level of quality. Leadership of the school is dispersed among many capable middle leaders. Their high ambition for pupils' success has had a considerable impact on school improvement.
- The leadership of teaching and performance is very effective. Procedures to check the quality of teaching are detailed and robust. Middle leaders have a sharp focus on, and make a considerable contribution to pupils' progress when monitoring the quality of learning. There is a strong 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 meticulous. This means that any pupil at risk of underachieving is quickly identified and if necessary, changes are made to ensure that this does not happen. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that every pupil has an equal opportunity.
- Staff work exceptionally well together in the various teams to which they belong. They are proud to work at the school.
- Leaders ensure that additional funds, such as the pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up funding and primary school sport funding are used to good effect by providing a wide range of additional opportunities for eligible pupils. It is clear that this extra funding is making a positive difference to pupils' achievement and well-being.
- 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 careful transition for each individual.
- The school has a deep knowledge and accurate view of its own performance. Improvement plans are very effective because they are detailed, closely linked to training, and reviewed carefully. They reflect leaders' high expectations and clear vision.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because pupils are able to reflect during assemblies and they enjoy kind, warm relationships.
- The school's range of subjects and other activities meets the needs of the pupils exceptionally well. Learning is enriched by many clubs and visits and gives priority to meeting the health, communication and learning needs of the pupils.
- Partnerships are very well developed: the partnership with the health service personnel makes a significant contribution to pupils' well-being. The school makes a good contribution to the teaching of pupils with autism and learning difficulties in other schools, through the training and advice it gives to mainstream staff.
- The local authority knows the school well and highly values the support it gives to other schools within the locality. School improvement advice to the governors has contributed to the management performance of the headteacher, which in turn is very effective in driving school improvement.
- Partnership with parents is excellent.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes a very significant contribution to the leadership of the school. Governors know how to secure what they want for the school and they know how the decisions they make impact on the achievement of the pupils. Governors gain first-hand evidence through the involvement they have with pupils, parents and staff. They hold leaders to account stringently for the progress of the pupils and school improvement, based on the high quality information they seek and receive. 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 effects 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	106543
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	439948

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Mason
Headteacher	Mr P Dahlstrom
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2009
Telephone number	01942 824150
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