

The Kingfisher Community Special School

Foxdenton Lane, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 9QR

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Early years provision | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This school goes from strength to strength. High quality performance has been sustained over a long period of time.
- Governors and all staff are relentless in pursuing the highest learning aspirations for every child.
- Pupils of all abilities make huge strides in their academic, personal and social development.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding and never less than good; it does not fall below this consistently high standard.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary and this reflects how happy and safe they feel in school.
- Provision in the early years is outstanding.
- The headteacher provides leadership that is second to none. Her attention to every detail is complemented by intelligent systems to monitor and evaluate pupils' and the school's performance.
- There are leaders throughout the school, and professional development and coaching means that all staff work very effectively together.
- Governance is exemplary, providing expert challenge to school leaders; the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body are outstanding role-models.
- The morale of staff is high and parents are rightly delighted with how well their children learn and are cared for.
- The local authority's excellent partnership with the school ensures that other schools benefit from the expertise of several of its staff, as well as its Chair of the Governing Body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in nine lessons and parts of lessons, taught by teachers and support staff. Most observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. The inspection team examined the pupils' personalised learning plans and the quality of work in their learning journeys.
- The inspection team held meetings and had discussions with pupils, the school's senior leaders and other staff and the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body. A discussion with a representative from the local authority was also held.
- The inspection team took into account responses to the school's own survey of its parents since there were too few responses to the online survey (Parent View). The 67 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspection team scrutinised safeguarding information, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff, data on pupils' attendance, the school's information showing the progress pupils make in their learning over time and the outcome of its survey of parents.

Inspection team

Henry Moreton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ashley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs.
- The main groups are pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Other groups have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication needs and multi-sensory impairment and physical disability, including visual impairment.
- Approximately one-half of the pupils are White British, with several minority ethnic groups, mainly Bangladeshi or Pakistani.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for school support through the pupil premium is well above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those pupils who are looked after by the local authority.)
- All pupils come from Oldham and the majority are transported to and from school.
- Children attend the Nursery provision on a part-time basis and full-time from Reception onwards.
- The headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body have been in post since the previous inspection. The Chair of the Governing Body is a National Leader of Governance (NLG). The headteacher is a National Leader of Education (NLE).
- The Chair of the Governors, the headteacher and several other staff are deployed by the local authority to provide a strategic lead and support for other schools.
- The school is a National Teaching School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- There are no areas for improvement which are not already known and being attended to by the school's leaders.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school's leadership and management are outstanding. The school has improved since its last inspection because the quality of its teaching is now never less than good.
- Teachers and support staff work together exceptionally well in lessons; the school's excellent provision for their professional development means that all staff are not only eager to take on responsibilities but are actively supported to do so.
- During the inspection, the inspection team observed nothing but exemplary pupil behaviour and the staff think that when inappropriate behaviour does occasionally occur it is very well-managed.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding exceptionally well. The performance of disadvantaged pupils is measured against others in the school and precisely targeted programmes are put in place for individuals, with a lead professional detailed to oversee impact. The additional support provided is extensive and includes a range of therapies and sensory interventions as well as developmental movement play, in which the school excels. As a result of these strategies, pupils who are supported by this money make at least the same progress as others.
- The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is exceptional. As one parent commented, 'My daughter doesn't feel any different to all other pupils, and that's worth so much to us as parents'. Specialist equipment is provided in classrooms so that the less able pupils have access to the full curriculum. For example, the school has an extensive collection of bicycles of all sizes and configurations so that every pupil who can is able to experience this activity, enhancing their well-being and ensuring the development of skills for life. These activities, and there are many others, supports pupils' learning exceptionally well.
- School leaders have developed the building and premises over time, with interesting corridors which have 'bus stops' every so often for pupils to 'rest' and complemented by high quality displays accessible to all, including pupils with visual impairment. The classrooms are carefully designed and managed to match the specific learning needs and abilities of all pupils.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind and the school community is extremely calm and cohesive.
- The contribution of the school's middle leaders to its work is outstanding since they are at the heart of the team working that exists throughout the school, with each team including early years children. These leaders, alongside subject leaders, are held accountable by the school's Governing Body for the quality of teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is rich and makes extensive provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is always evolving since the changing nature of the intake of pupils is becoming more demanding over time. There are many enrichment and educational visits and these complement well the learning in discrete subjects such as physical education, religious education and science. Every pupil, every day, reads, speaks and learns about numbers, and communicates in some way.
- The school's assessment arrangements are rigorous with rigorous systems in place to ensure the targets teachers set for every pupil are challenging, and their assessment of pupils' performance is accurate. As a result of the effective management of assessment across the whole school and its moderation, the school is rightly confident that the data it gathers is accurate. Leaders use this information to make further improvements as they have recently done, for example, in science.
- The work of the school in helping pupils, and their parents, to make informed choices about next steps is outstanding and this helps the most able pupils, for example, secure the appropriate placement when they leave Kingfisher. Partnerships with many other agencies are extensive and the school hosts professionals from the health sector.
- The partnership between the school and its local authority is a model of outstanding practice. The local authority has a thorough and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and uses several of its personnel well to support other schools, while mindful of not letting standards slip at Kingfisher.
- School leaders are modest in acknowledging its success, but accept that how it presents itself to the world through its website somewhat underplays its many strengths, one of which is how the school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school has continued to be very effective since the previous inspection. The Governing Body has not become complacent but has continued to drive the school forward. Governors have an accurate view about the school's performance, including the quality of teaching. They are knowledgeable about the needs of the pupils and use intelligent processes to monitor and evaluate performance. Governors have a forensic understanding of the school's data since they are involved fully

in its evaluation. Governors manage pupil premium funding exceptionally well and this enables them to use every penny to best support disadvantaged pupils with the result that they achieve at least as well as others in the school; like others their attainment is very low, but their progress from starting points is at least good but more often outstanding. The governing body has a robust system to check the performance of staff and this rewards good teaching and addresses underperformance, all within a tightly controlled budget. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet current requirements. The Governing Body and school leaders do not have a 'cosy' relationship. Governors are supportive and have empathy, but they are also sharp and businesslike.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Despite the very high level of needs of all pupils, learning observed during the inspection was never interrupted by incidents of inappropriate behaviour. There are no exclusions.
- Inspectors witnessed calm, purposeful and busy learning in all of the lessons visited and around the school, including at playtimes and lunchtimes. As one member of staff commented, 'Issues arise as a result of individual needs but these are well-managed with appropriate strategies in place for the individual child', while a teacher commented, 'I have never seen any instances of bullying in this school.'
- However, the inspector who spoke to a group of pupils had great difficulty maintaining order since all six girls and boys spent the entire half-hour laughing as one showed them a story about a mischievous boy who teases his grandma and her pet dog!
- An inspector asked one of the older, more able boys what he most liked doing. His response was, 'Helping other children do as well as me'. This is representative of how well pupils relate to each other.
- Typical comments from parents are, 'My son is the happiest he's ever been, and so am I', and 'Kingfisher has brought the best out of our daughter.'
- Attendance is average. It is outstanding for many but for others it is not, for medical reasons.
- Punctuality is good and all pupils take pride in wearing their school uniform.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. This is an improvement since the last inspection as a result of a tightening of procedures.
- The school works with a very wide range of agencies and professionals, including the health professionals on site, to reduce risks, particularly for any pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- During the inspection the fire alarm went off, unplanned. In the event, a false alarm, but the evacuation was speedy and pupils kept safe.
- All of the staff who responded to the questionnaire agreed that 'children are safe in this school'.
- All staff are well trained to recognise the risks pupils face and take effective action to ensure their safety and well-being. In a physical education lesson, for example, every pupil had an adult supporting them, or very close by in the case of the most able pupils.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching over time, including in English and mathematics is consistently outstanding so that all groups of pupils make at least good and more often outstanding progress.
- The teaching of reading, number, communication, personal and social skills is outstanding. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is consistent across the whole school.
- In the lessons observed by inspectors, mostly with senior school leaders, the achievement of pupils was outstanding.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, even though it was then also judged as outstanding. This is because of the relentless drive to do things the 'Kingfisher' way, a standard to which all staff aspire.
- The use of communication aids and technology, some of which are purpose-built or specially adapted, as well as extensive use of therapies, such as art and play, ensures that the less able pupils make outstanding progress.
- The most able pupils make outstanding progress due to the attention given to developing their speaking

and writing skills. From the early years and across the school teachers and support staff encourage pupils to be independent and this develops their confidence exceptionally well.

- The home-school communications diary supports parents in helping their children, including with their homework.
- The marking of pupils' work is mostly verbal, but at the same time the learning journeys that contain each pupil's work and which shows outstanding progress over time are well-annotated with helpful comments from teachers and support staff.
- The support staff make a significant contribution to the school's success. Typical comments received are, 'I have experienced many settings over many years and I can honestly say that it is a privilege to be a member of staff at this school', while from another perspective another comments, 'I have been part of Kingfisher for just a few months and I am proud and privileged to be part of such a wonderful school'.
- Teaching in the early years is outstanding.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below what is typical for their age because of their learning difficulties.
- Progress is outstanding in phonics, reading, number work and in pupils' personal and social development.
- Progress is at least good for all groups, including those who receive additional funding.
- The most able pupils achieve outstandingly well because of teachers' high expectations and the specifically tailored and personal support pupils receive.
- Pupils' sporting skills are improving and teachers' extensive use of sensory, play, massage, art, pet and developmental movement therapies, as well as intensive interactions, is having an excellent impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- Pupils told inspectors how much they 'love their football', they swim, cycle and make use of the high quality outdoor play equipment.
- Pupils' achievements are meticulously recorded by staff and they are celebrated in the regular assemblies.
- Pupils in the early years make outstanding progress which means that they make a very successful transition into Year 1.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and their achievement is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Early Years provision is outstanding as it was at the previous inspection.
- The curriculum engages children's interest and they respond exceptionally well to the challenges learning holds for them. As a result their behaviour is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding. The Nursery staff establish excellent links with families and quickly gain their trust.
- The leadership of early years is outstanding. All children benefit from a safe and high quality learning environment. The resources used by staff is well-matched to pupils' specific learning needs, whether it is for the most able pupils or for those with complex and profound needs.
- Planning for children's needs is precise through the Personalised Learning Plans and their progress is meticulously charted through their Learning Journeys.
- All staff use assessment information to target the next steps in children's learning, and speedily draw on any additional therapies or other support that is needed.
- Outdoor provision has improved since the previous inspection with better play equipment and improvements to the outside environment.

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

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| Unique reference number | 133369 |
| Local authority | Oldham |
| Inspection number | 448160 |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 150 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kevin Fennelly |
| Headteacher | Anne Redmond |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 July 2010 |
| Telephone number | 0161 770 5910 |
| Fax number | Not applicable |
| Email address | info@kingfisher.oldham.sch.uk |

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