

Oswaldtwistle White Ash School

Thwaites Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 4QG

Inspection dates 13–14 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher and her senior team have led to exceptional improvements since the last inspection so that the school is now outstanding in all areas.
- There is a very clear vision and sense of direction, shared by all concerned, leading to exceptionally high staff morale. There are high levels of support and appreciation from parents for the work done by the school in support of the pupils.
- Provision for the early years is outstanding because of outstanding leadership that has led to children making outstanding progress in their early learning goals from very low starting points.
- A large majority of all groups of pupils make good or outstanding progress from their starting points. Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make the same levels of progress as their peers.
- Pupils behave extremely well, especially when they are learning. All staff manage pupils' behaviour with amazing skill and sensitivity and ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for at all times. The arrangements for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strong but less so with regard to life in modern Britain.
- Teachers and teaching assistants combine tremendously well to ensure that each pupil is able to make good or better progress in their learning, referring closely to carefully designed personal education plans.
- Leadership and management are exceptional in ensuring that all staff are extremely consistent when following agreed school policies and procedures.
- There are excellent opportunities for staff to develop professionally through attendance on courses up to masters degree level. Teaching assistants have benefited in particular so that they provide an exceptionally consistent backbone of support for their teacher colleagues. Senior leaders provide outstanding training and support to staff in multi-sensory learning or in the management of pupil behaviour.
- All leaders, with the strong support of very knowledgeable and effective governors, ensure that teaching and support across the school are never less than good so that all pupils make good or outstanding progress in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 full or part lessons taught by 10 teachers and one higher level teaching assistant.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, the chair of governors and the local authority representative.
- One inspector met with a small group of older pupils.
- One inspector listened to a small group of readers.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, on the corridors and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, self-review document, information about pupils' achievements and progress, safeguarding and behaviour policies and governors' meetings and minutes.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses from parents who used Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and of a further 18 responses where parents used 'hard copies' of the same questionnaire.
- Inspectors received 42 returns from the staff questionnaire about the school.

Inspection team

John Ashley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides education for 84 pupils aged between two and 11 years who have a wide range of complex disabilities and special educational needs. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- There has been a steep rise in pupil numbers since the last inspection.
- The range of special educational needs includes those with autistic spectrum disorders, moderate learning difficulties, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, a few with additional emotional and behavioural difficulties and some with health and medical needs.
- Over a third of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds with a similar percentage speaking English as an additional language. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The deputy headteacher is a specialist teacher (in profound and multiple learning difficulties) and local leader in education. Two other senior teachers are also specialist teachers, one for autistic spectrum disorders and one for multi-sensory education.
- There are strong links with Tor View School which is a National Teaching School. The school regularly partakes in meetings with a group of local primary schools about the early years provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review and strengthen the school's work in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by refining the school's promotion of British values to enable pupils to play a full role in British society.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and her team, overseen by extremely well-informed governors, provide exceptional drive and support to ensure that all staff teams work to common ends, which relate to pupil care, safety, progress and achievement. As a result, the areas identified for improvement from the last inspection have been fully addressed. Teaching assistants are now a major strength of the school's provision; teaching and support are extremely well pitched to meet the needs of each pupil; and governors are now very knowledgeable about how pupils are assessed and the progress they make.
- There is a great atmosphere for learning in the school evident in each class. Staff and pupils regularly reflect upon what has been achieved in lessons and celebrate joyously. Parents are particularly grateful to the school, saying, 'It's a wonderful place. I wouldn't want my child to attend anywhere else!'
- Leaders, including subject or middle leaders, have introduced and fully promoted an exceptional system for accurately assessing pupils' abilities in each subject and then providing and implementing personal education plans which include challenging targets. They have rigorously checked on the quality of teaching and support over time to ensure that all groups of pupils, whatever the levels of need, make the progress they should, in each area against challenging targets.
- There is only very light touch support provided for the school by the local authority.
- Equal opportunities are particularly well-promoted through consistent reference to pupils' personal education plans alongside regular and accurate observation, assessment of their work and responses in lessons. In this way, different groups, including those who are eligible for pupil premium or who speak English as an additional language, make similar levels of progress as their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from the support of staff who are bilingual.
- The school's curriculum provides a wide range of experiences and learning opportunities for pupils, including lessons in the local wooded area, educational visits, playing of musical instruments, swimming and hydrotherapy, themed days (for example Eid Day), residential visits that include camping and after-school clubs and summer school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, but further work to strengthen this aspect is needed so that pupils know and understand even more about what is expected from them as citizens living in modern Britain.
- Partnerships in the wider community of schools and colleges have seen specialist teachers in autism and multi-sensory learning providing advice for and lectures to students on initial teacher training courses. Other staff also share best practice with local primary and special schools, for example early years provision.
- All staff and governors receive regular update training about safeguarding policies and procedures alongside current national guidance. Staff know the procedures for reporting any child protection concerns and work cohesively to provide outstanding levels of supervision to ensure pupils' safety. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet requirements.
- Attendance and behaviour are exceptionally well-monitored. Different health and social service professionals work in close partnership with the school and parents through regular 'Team around the Family' meetings. As a result, vulnerable pupils, for example those who have medical and health needs or who are looked after, receive additional support to improve attendance, behaviour, health and learning.
- Because of the consistency with which all staff work throughout the school, transition for pupils between each class and key stage is exceptionally well-managed to ensure continuity and progression in learning and behaviour.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has full membership and comprises a range of professional backgrounds, skills and interests. It operates very efficiently through the work of its three committees alongside regular, focused visits by link governors. Governors oversee the excellent use and deployment of finances and resources, making decisions about how best to improve the school's accommodation. Governors are very well informed about the quality of teaching and pupil progress and achievement through headteacher and subject leader reports. They know that pupils eligible for pupil premium funding have made similar levels of progress in all key subjects as their peers. They know which pupils have benefited from attendance at after-school clubs or residential experiences. Sports premium funding has been very well used to provide additional trampolining and 'rebound therapy' sessions. The most able pupils have been encouraged to develop their gymnastic skills to high levels. Governors oversee strong teacher and teaching assistant appraisal policy and practice. All staff are able to access relevant continuous professional development, some following part-time degree courses. Governors fully support the headteacher in recommendations about whether or not teachers move to the upper pay scale based

upon classroom performance. Governors review and agree all school policies, including those relating to the Equality Act. Governors benefit from training, for example, induction for new governors or safeguarding and safer recruitment training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils of all ages have a real thirst for learning because of the extremely well-planned lessons and activities provided by skilled teachers and teaching assistants to meet individual needs. Some pupils exhibit challenging behaviours, but because of the insight, understanding and sensitivity of all staff, any potential disruption is quickly and calmly managed so that the focus is back on learning. As a result, behaviour for learning is outstanding.
- A senior member of staff provides excellent support and training for staff, especially newly qualified teachers or new teaching assistants, in the management of pupil behaviour, including for pupils with additional autistic spectrum disorders. This is an outstanding aspect of the school's leadership and management.
- Levels of pupil supervision are high, but staff promote pupils' independence very well so that movement around the school is calm and responsible with the most able pupils providing support for younger or less able peers.
- Each pupil has a personal and social development plan which is referred to in and out of lessons. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress in improving these aspects, so that they become more independent and responsible for choices in their behaviour.
- Pupils say that there is only occasional bad behaviour from a small number of pupils who have social or emotional difficulties. This behaviour is soon managed effectively by staff. Pupils say, 'Every child in the school is my friend.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The relevant governors' committee has made excellent decisions about how best to ensure that the school's accommodation is safe, secure and accessible – for example, through additional fencing, ramps and intercom entry and exit systems. Arrangements for visitors are robust, and health and safety policies are consistently applied.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and safety awareness in different contexts, for example in personal, social and health education lessons, learning about safety on the internet and when partaking in road safety or cycling proficiency activities.
- Excellent supervision ensures that all pupils are safe and secure. This is confirmed by every response from parents on the Parent View questionnaire.
- There have been no reported fixed-term exclusions or incidents of bullying, homophobia or racism according to regular headteacher reports to governors. Parents say that they 'have never heard of any child being bullied at this school.' Pupils say that there is no bullying.
- Policies and practices in regard to safeguarding, health and safety, educational visits and behaviour are consistently applied to excellent effect by all staff. Systems for recording incidents and accidents are rigorous, including where safe handling of pupils is required. Staff have received appropriate training in safe handling techniques.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is never less than good and has improved over time since the last inspection report to an outstanding level. Senior leaders have successfully introduced personal education plans for each pupil based upon 'I can' statements and next steps for learning in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and personal and social development. These plans form the basis for teachers' planning and their deployment of teaching assistants and other resources to meet the individual needs of each pupil. Teaching assistants provide exceptional support for learning and behaviour in all lessons.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that strengths are shared with other staff and areas for improvement are addressed through appraisal or continued professional development opportunities. They have also overseen a successful regrouping of class groups to take greater account of increased numbers, ability levels and the social compatibility of pupils. Staff say that

this has contributed greatly to improvements made in the quality of teaching and support since the last inspection.

- Teachers' use of observation and assessment in lessons is exceptional because, in partnership with teaching assistants, regular and consistent checks are made on pupils' learning and responses in all lessons. As a result, the smallest steps of learning are captured and recorded, often through pictorial evidence with additional evaluative comments by staff.
- Excellent use is made of information and communication technology systems, for example in the multi-sensory room to engage learners with very complex needs. Signing or a picture exchange system are well-used to enable learners with communication difficulties to take a full part in learning. For example, in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, the most able enjoyed re-reading a story book with their teacher while the less able were encouraged to use simple picture cues to sequence the events in the same story.
- Opportunities to explore different shapes in mathematics allowed for less able pupils to work closely with a teaching assistant when identifying simple two-dimensional shapes and then to use their understanding of letters and the sounds they make to label their work. The most able, when reviewing their efforts, could talk knowledgeably about symmetrical and non-symmetrical shapes or state which shapes included rectangles.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide excellent opportunities in music and physical education for pupils of different abilities to partake in playing a range of percussion instruments to the beat of a 'Queen' track or to explore different apparatus during a gymnastics lesson. High levels of challenge are in place for pupils to test out their abilities to play loudly or softly and keep in time, with varying levels of support. Pupils in physical education lessons practise balancing and jumping activities with increasing independence. The pace of learning in lessons observed is sensitively managed to take full account of the needs of each pupil so that the transition from one activity to another does not interrupt the flow of learning.
- Pupils throughout the school and in all subjects are encouraged to review their work with staff so that they are then fully included in checking their achievement and next steps for learning. Questioning, staff explanations and use of visual prompts are expertly used, for example when Key Stage 1 pupils were developing their abilities to count in tens. This information is regularly collated during class meetings to update the school's overview of the progress being made by different groups of pupils.
- The work of other professionals, for example the occupational therapists, provides outstanding support for some pupils whose physical difficulties might affect their full access to learning. Through 'postural management' programmes or handwriting assistance, these pupils have equal opportunities to participate in the same learning experiences as their peers. 'Rebound therapy' provided by a trained teacher also gives excellent support for pupils with coordination difficulties and aids their full involvement in physical education lessons.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in lessons and when pupils have access to outdoor learning in the local wooded area or when attending educational visits.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All pupils make good or better progress from very low starting points, regardless of the level of learning needs, and including those eligible for pupil premium funding or who speak English as an additional language. The school accurately checks the ability levels of all pupils on entry to the school and sets realistic but challenging targets. Because all staff take a full part in checking these levels, agreeing personal education plans and then checking the small steps of progress pupils make during lessons, there is very strong evidence to support this outstanding judgement. There is a clear and effective promotion of equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Pupils show exceptional levels of interest in lessons and demonstrate extremely positive attitudes. These strengths result from excellent lesson planning based on the ability levels of pupils, engaging use of resources, and very well-deployed teaching assistants. Pupils want to do well and they are proud of their achievements, for example when they recognise number patterns or accurately write out simple three letter words in literacy lessons.
- The most able pupils are provided with good challenges in their learning, such as when investigating the properties of different shapes and then recognising aspects of symmetry and different angles. Able readers in Key Stage 2 will re-read and review a story read to the class by the teacher and select their favourite characters or explain the meaning of different words and phrases.
- In food technology, pupils overcome their anxieties about food to experiment with or explore different food items and develop greater confidence and independence. In physical education lessons, the most

able enjoy the challenge of bouncing on and jumping off a trampette and then landing on two feet with minimal support, while less able pupils enjoy the experience of moving and climbing over a large, inflated ball.

- Teachers and teaching assistants teach and support pupils, particularly the most able, so that they begin to recognise and make use of their knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make when learning to read simple stories or when writing out letters and short words. Staff encourage a love of exciting or humorous stories so that pupils act out some of the events with a great sense of fun and enjoyment, especially when visual aids or props are used to reinforce the story.
- Pupils are used to celebrating their achievements with each other – a regular feature seen by inspectors. As a result, there is a real sense of tolerance and appreciation between pupil groups both in lessons and within other contexts, for example 'snack time'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted in lessons, for example when more able pupils assist less able pupils in their work.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The provision for early years is outstanding. The early years leader has ensured that her team work extremely well together in meeting the needs of children who experience a wide range of complex learning difficulties. As a result, by the time children leave at the end of their time in the Reception class, the large majority have made outstanding progress in their early learning goals with most being ready to enter Key Stage 1 class groups.
- The early years staff make excellent use of the school's systems for checking children's developmental levels on entry to the school. They establish an accurate view of these levels to then inform realistic targets and planning for individual needs. The learning journals provide exceptional evidence of children's progress over time with reference to staff notes and pictures that are shared with parents.
- Children enjoy a wide range of learning experiences, not least the nearby wooded area, whereby they develop social and communication skills and greater independence. They love to explore food using all their senses or when working with staff in the multi-sensory room. They have access to music therapy, off-site visits, role play in the school hall (for example life in the North Pole) and physical education, hydrotherapy or rebound therapy sessions. They learn to communicate their needs, likes and dislikes while the more able begin to recognise numbers or letters of the alphabet. Very occasionally, more able children would benefit from more time to think about their answers to questions posed by staff.
- Children learn to form positive relationships with each other and with staff. As a result, they gain in confidence and become less anxious when presented with new experiences. They settle down to lessons and learn to behave in line with staff expectations and show they are ready to learn. They learn to take responsibility for behaving safely in and around school, responding well to sensitive staff guidance.
- Outstanding partnerships with other professionals, for example the speech therapist, result in additional support and input for some children so that they make similar steps of progress as their peers from their starting points in developing speaking, listening and early reading skills.
- There are regular links with parents, often through home visits by a higher level teaching assistant or via home-school books. Parents say how much they value the school's efforts in meeting the complex needs of their children. There is an 'open door' policy for parents and they have been able to set up a regular 'self-help' group.

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	119894
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448013

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheran Perera
Headteacher	Phillipa Conti
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2012
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