

Hayfield School

Manor Drive, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 4LN

Inspection dates

18–19 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and teachers know pupils exceptionally well because they are committed to finding out about and tackling pupils' barriers to learning.
- Leaders promote equality very well. The full breadth of the national curriculum is provided for all pupils who are able to access it. Pupils who return to mainstream education, thrive.
- Pupils are well cared for. Learning in literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education is well planned.
- Pupils are well-supported in the development of their social and communication skills through breakfast club, for example. Physical development is promoted well through morning 'wake and shake' and indoor sensory trails.
- Early years provision is outstanding because the leader of this area has maintained the consistently high rates of progress from children's very low starting points.
- Pupils in all classes make good progress in phonics, spelling and reading because they are taught well.
- Mathematics, identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection, is improving. However, pupils' writing development is slow because pupils have weak comprehension skills and are not asked to complete longer written tasks.
- Teachers assess pupils' starting points accurately when they join the school. Teachers use this information well to identify gaps in learning and to set initial targets.
- Teachers have good subject and curriculum knowledge, which they use skilfully to plan pupils' next steps in learning and to design interesting activities for pupils.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils show respect towards one another. Most pupils listen carefully to each other and wait patiently for their turn to speak and to take part.
- Attendance is low, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Some pupils miss out on learning when they lose a whole day to attend medical appointments.
- Governors are suitably knowledgeable and skilled. They make sure that arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, do not know enough about the progress that pupils make from when they start in the school to the end of a key stage, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' action plans cannot be used well enough by governors to hold leaders to account for school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress that pupils make in writing by making sure that teachers and teaching assistants:
 - tackle errors made in letter and number formation
 - further develop pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to write in detail and to complete longer writing tasks.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, including governors, by making sure that their monitoring of pupils' attendance and progress identifies any inconsistencies for different groups of pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Sharpen whole-school action plans so that these become a more useful tool for governors to hold leaders to account by stating clearly:
 - who is responsible for the key actions
 - how much each action will cost
 - the intended outcome of the actions and when this will be achieved
 - how the process of achieving the actions will be monitored, by who and when.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have a vision for excellence, supported by all staff who have high expectations for their pupils. They are committed to removing barriers to learning so that pupils achieve their potential.
- Leaders provide an engaging curriculum to enable pupils to experience the full breadth of the national curriculum where this is appropriate for pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences are promoted well in the school.
- Pupils have a safe environment in which to learn. Differences are acknowledged and accepted. Leaders' commitment to tackling inequality is acknowledged through external accreditation as a 'school for sanctuary'. The school's 'rights respecting award' recognises leaders' work in promoting fundamental British values. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong through their work on the school charter. They know how important it is to show respect to each other.
- Leaders plan to reintegrate pupils to mainstream education where possible. Working with parents, they organise a programme of visits to mainstream schools followed by placements for part of each week. Teachers focus on pupils' personal, social and emotional needs and developing pupils' resilience, so that they do not just cope when they leave Hayfield School, but go on to thrive in their new school. Pupils who returned to mainstream schools in 2015/16 were placed well and continue to be settled.
- Leaders are committed to improving teaching, learning and assessment in the school. For example, leaders identified that phonics teaching was not good enough, so they regrouped pupils by ability for their phonics work. This was of benefit for some pupils, whose reading improved as a result. However, for some other pupils the changes were unsettling and this slowed their progress in reading. Further improvements to phonics teaching have been made in response.
- Teachers are gaining confidence in using the school's new approach to assessment. They use the standards expected for different ages in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE). However, the long-term absence of the school's progress leader has inevitably delayed plans to expand this approach to other subjects. This has forced a return to the previous system in the interim.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching is thorough. Teachers appreciate the feedback they are given from leaders' formal observations of their teaching and from other short visits to their lessons. Leaders, including governors and subject leaders, look at pupils' work in books regularly. Leaders organise support for teachers where areas for improvement are identified; teachers' practice improves as a result.
- Teachers know their pupils exceptionally well and, because of this, pupils are well cared for at this school. After allowing pupils to settle in for a few weeks, teachers do a baseline assessment of pupils when they start in the school. This is used well to plan highly personalised support which is clearly stated in pupils' individual support plans. Families are closely involved in planning support and setting targets for their children. This helps pupils to overcome their barriers to learning and to develop well, both academically and socially. Funding for pupils who have special educational needs

and/or disabilities is therefore managed well and used to good effect.

- Leaders provide training and support to help staff to manage pupils' behaviour. This behaviour is often challenging. As a result, behaviour is managed exceptionally well, without any fuss and with minimal disruption to learning. Staff are confident in using de-escalation to help pupils to return to learning as quickly as possible.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils to help them to develop the skills they need to be ready to learn in English and mathematics lessons. Teaching assistants help disadvantaged pupils to improve their social skills. Additional speech and language therapy is to be introduced from September for disadvantaged pupils who have poor communication or sensory needs.
- Primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well, for example to pay for support from a specialist PE teacher to develop pupils' movement and team-building skills. This gives pupils the skills they need to participate well in other sports.
- Although teachers monitor the progress and attendance of each individual pupil carefully, leaders' overall monitoring is less robust. Leaders do not have a firm enough grasp of whether weaknesses are being tackled, nor do they know if improvements are happening quickly enough.
- Leaders, including governors, do not know enough about the progress that pupils make in all subjects by the end of a key stage from when they joined the school. Leaders are therefore unable to make comparisons with pupils from similar starting points nationally where this is appropriate, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders know that attendance overall was low in 2016, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders monitor attendance for each individual pupil, but do not routinely check on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in the school. They therefore do not know if their work to tackle absence is making enough difference for this group.
- Staff work closely with parents. The majority of parents who spoke to inspectors had nothing but praise for the school and the support provided for their children. A very small number of parents expressed concerns about the information given to them on their children's progress. Some annual reviews have not taken place within the required timeframe because meetings have been postponed due to difficulties such as staff absence. These are scheduled to take place during the summer holidays.

Governance of the school

- Governors are effective because they make sure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to carry out their responsibilities well.
- Governors plan an audit of their skills in the autumn term to make sure there are no gaps in their skills and to identify future training needs. They have already had training in safeguarding and looking out for the signs of extremism and radicalisation.
- Governors know the school well because they make regular visits, including visits to lessons. They work with leaders to review pupils' work.
- The school budget is managed well. The information technology suite has been refurbished recently. It includes a contract for external management of internet access and a more robust internet filtering system to protect children.

- Governors use external reports to help them to prioritise where improvements are needed.
- Governors are not provided with the information they need to hold all leaders to account, such as pupils' progress information by year group or for each subject, or the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' action plans are not presented to governors in a format to enable them to hold staff to account for making improvements. As there are no deadlines or success criteria in these plans, it is unclear if improvements are on track or making the intended difference.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff pre-employment checks are recorded accurately and correspond with information stored in staff personnel files. The single central record meets requirements.
- All staff employed by the school have recently completed updates on safeguarding and child protection. They have a good understanding of the action to take if they have concerns about a child. All staff have completed 'Prevent' duty training as well as training relating to female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.
- Staff have been trained in the safe handling of pupils, including in the use of restraint, where this is needed to prevent pupils from harming themselves or others.
- Pupils are extremely well supervised while in school. In lessons, there are sufficient numbers of teachers and teaching assistants to meet the needs of all pupils. At playtime and lunchtime, staff supervise pupils well. Staff support pupils' play and help them to move back to lessons quickly when social time comes to an end. Staff intervene quickly to help pupils to manage their behaviour and to stay safe.
- Some areas of the school are not fit for purpose. For example, there is little outdoor play equipment for pupils to use, with rusty climbing frames that have been out of use for some time. Plans are in place to finally replace these ready for the new school year.
- Most pupils who use local authority organised transport are picked up and dropped off safely in the school car park. However, leaders have not fully considered the risks in allowing pupils to be picked up and dropped off by taxis which double-park on the road.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together as a team. They strive to learn about their pupils' needs and interests and the best way to help them.
- Teachers plan work carefully for pupils, using what they know about pupils' potential barriers to learning. They design tasks skilfully to review and consolidate prior learning, fill any gaps and move learning on when pupils are ready for their next challenge.
- Teachers have good subject and curriculum knowledge which they use well in designing a range of interesting resources for pupils. These help pupils to grasp the next steps in their learning. Teachers know that pupils work best with a variety of

different resources and several short tasks.

- Teachers support mathematics development well through using mathematical equipment. Pupils used five, 10 and 20 number frames confidently to deepen their understanding of number bonds. Number lines were used well, including using model building bricks, as pupils counted the steps in addition and subtraction calculations they had been given. Teachers provided a range of different counters for pupils, including sweets, coins and marbles as pupils further developed their fine motor skills in handling small objects.
- Teaching of phonics is a strength and, because of this, pupils use phonics strategies well to help them to sound out unfamiliar words. They use picture cues with confidence. Pupils who have difficulties with communication are supported well by teachers trained in the use of 'Makaton' to help them to develop their understanding.
- Teachers, and most teaching assistants, use questioning well to check on pupils' learning and to support the development of pupils' reasoning skills. Staff identify when misconceptions occur and these are quickly tackled to improve learning.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate because regular internal moderation takes place where teachers discuss pupils' work and share their marking. External validation through the local authority and other local schools has further confirmed teachers' assessments to be accurate.
- Some variability exists in the quality of support provided by teaching assistants as this is not always up to the same high standard. When pupils are not given sufficient challenge, time is wasted. The resulting slow pace means that pupils do not make the planned gains in their learning.
- Some pupils have weak letter and number formation, sometimes as a result of delays in pupils' fine motor skills development. Teachers and teaching assistants do not always correct errors when they occur.
- A very small number of teachers fail to keep pupils on task right through to the end of the lesson. When pupils do not have something purposeful to do, they become restless and noise levels rise. This is not always managed well by these few teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Learning starts from the moment pupils arrive at school. Pupils' physical development is considered important by leaders and provides pupils with a good start to the day. Pupils take part in 'wake and shake' activities and an indoor sensory trail provides stimulating activities for those who need this.
- Breakfast club not only provides pupils with a healthy food option as they start their day, but also provides opportunities for supervising staff to help pupils to develop their social skills further in sitting, eating and sharing a meal with others.
- Leaders replaced the annual sports day event this year with a sports activity week, being trialled for the first time. This took place during the week of the inspection. This

looked like it was going to be an enormous success as pupils were encouraged to become more active through introducing them to new sports and outdoor activities. This included free-running, ultimate Frisbee, Zumba and an inflatable assault course, with sports coaches delivering these sessions for pupils.

- Pupils take on positions of responsibility as representatives of the school council. Those who met with an inspector were fabulous ambassadors for the school. They gave a detailed account of why they are happy and enjoy their learning at school.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils know about other faiths and cultures. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet. Pupils take part in residential activities. The curriculum is further enriched through visits to places of interest in the local area, such as Chester Zoo and Chester Cathedral.
- Pupils are well supported in the development of their social and communication skills, resilience and their readiness to learn through the well-planned PSHE programme.
- Some areas of the school are not appropriate learning environments and are therefore not fit for purpose. For example, the 'quiet room' and 'dark room' are empty and colourless spaces with no resources to provide comfort and a sense of security, or to provide distraction or a safe place to 'act out' frustrations. Outdoor play equipment is long overdue for replacement and the outside space adjoining the early years classroom is 'shabby' and dirty.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good, particularly in lessons where teachers use praise expertly to encourage pupils so that they know their contributions are valued. Staff talk to pupils in a calm and supportive way and model the behaviour that they expect in return.
- Pupils demonstrate respect towards each other. In lessons they let others speak and listen to what they have to say. Most pupils can wait patiently for their turn.
- Staff use of physical restraint, to prevent pupils from harming themselves or others, has reduced substantially from last year. Staff are becoming experts in de-escalation because they know the 'triggers' that can upset pupils and know how to avoid them. This stops many aggressive outbursts from happening.
- Leaders use a range of strategies to improve attendance, including telephone calls to parents on the first day of absence, home visits and panel reviews to engage with external agencies and to provide support for families. For some families, this support is helping them to make sure their children attend school regularly. However, a small number of pupils with complex medical needs are often absent for the whole day when they attend medical appointments.
- Attendance has declined over a three-year period and shows little sign of improvement. In 2016, attendance overall and for disadvantaged pupils was low and in the lowest 10% for all special schools.
- Pupils say that there is some bullying in school, but inspectors found no evidence of this. Some pupils do not have a deep enough understanding of what bullying is and

refer to being bullied when they have friendship fall-outs.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants are determined that pupils should do as well as pupils in other schools from similarly low, and often very low, starting points.
- Pupils' starting points are assessed accurately shortly after pupils start at the school. Pupils often start at the school part-way through the school year. This frequently follows long periods of time away from education. Literacy and numeracy development are given a higher priority than other areas, as pupils often have gaps in their learning in these areas.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully against targets set for their learning in literacy, numeracy and in PSHE. Additional help is provided for pupils at the first sign of their progress slowing, or existing support is modified to better meet pupils' needs. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others in their mixed-age classes.
- Reading is a strength. The majority of pupils across all classes make good progress from their low starting points in phonics, spelling and reading.
- Mathematics was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection which leaders have tackled through the introduction of a mathematics recovery programme. This is helping pupils to develop their understanding of numeracy and pupils' progress is improving as a result. Additional help provided for pupils in small groups or one to one is effective because it is helping them to improve their skills.
- Pupils' understanding of vocabulary and their comprehension skills are weak. This is restricting pupils' writing development. Although pupils have the opportunity to write in subjects across the curriculum, such as in humanities and science, pupils are not asked to write in any detail or to complete longer writing tasks.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Since the last inspection, the leader of the early years has maintained the consistently high rates of progress from children's very low starting points. This is the result of sustained high expectations for children's learning and behaviour.
- All adults who work in this area know children exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to plan appropriate provision for children, which ensures that they are very well cared for. Relationships between staff and children are consistently strong.
- Teachers and teaching assistants who support children in this area are highly skilled at assessing children accurately. Staff plan bespoke activities across the curriculum to interest, excite and enthuse children. The needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well met, because activities planned for them exactly match their stage in development.
- Teaching is of consistently high quality. Staff are calm, intuitive and caring. As a result, children come to school happily each morning and settle quickly to the activities planned for them.
- Children enjoy their learning. Children showed good listening and attention skills as

they sat calmly, watching adults demonstrate activities. Children use physical cues well to count, such as hand-clapping and jumping. Children know about taking turns and wait patiently for their turn to contribute, or move to their table as and when directed by an adult. Children are polite and friendly and talked passionately about the work they were doing. Good development of fine motor skills was seen as pupils painted their fish using a cotton wool bud. Children knew how to help the teacher to tidy up at the end of the lesson and joined in enthusiastically with the 'tidy up' rhyme.

- Staff are highly vigilant in keeping children safe. Training is targeted at updating the knowledge of staff working in this area. This ensures that all staff fully understand their responsibility to keep children safe and well looked after.
- Literacy is a strength because children make good progress in developing their skills in early reading and writing. Speaking skills for many children is less strong, but these children are well supported with help for their speech and language development where necessary.
- While all welfare requirements are met, occasionally there is a lack of clarity as to who is the named person allocated to the care of a particular child.
- The outside learning space is quite 'tired-looking', shabby and in need of some refurbishment to make this area as bright and stimulating as the inside classroom.

School details

Unique reference number	105128
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10001164

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Weise
Headteacher	Lee Comber
Telephone number	0151 677 9303
Website	www.hayfield.wirral.sch.uk
Email address	schooloffice@hayfield.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities or an education, health and care plan. The majority of pupils have an autistic spectrum disorder or a moderate learning difficulty. A small number have social, emotional and mental health needs or a physical disability.
- The school is smaller than average, but is oversubscribed. A further increase in the number of pupils on roll is anticipated in 2017/18. Pupils travel to the school from across the local authority, with the majority using transport that is provided for them.
- Pupils are admitted at any point during their primary school career and are taught in 11 small, mixed-age classes, placed according to their needs.
- The school has far more boys than girls.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. Almost all pupils are White British, with a very small number of pupils from other heritages. No pupils are believed

to speak English as an additional language.

- A few pupils attend local mainstream schools for between half and one full day per week as part of a plan for their phased reintegration to mainstream education.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed in September 2015 and were previously senior leaders in the school at the time of the last inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. Urgent action was taken during the inspection to tackle some omissions.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, inspectors observed teaching and learning in most of the 11 classes. This was done through short visits to lessons when inspectors were joined by the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also made some longer visits to classes.
- Pupils' work was checked while inspectors were in lessons and an inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other leaders and a group of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- An inspector met with a group of four governors, including the chair of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority, and a headteacher from a local mainstream primary school who serves as the school improvement associate.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed during lessons and also during playtime and lunchtime. An inspector observed pupils using the transport provided for them as they arrived at school in the morning and when they left school at the end of the day.
- An inspector met formally with a group of pupils from the school council to find out their views of the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil or staff surveys.
- There were 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector spoke to a parent on the telephone who had requested a conversation with an inspector.
- An inspector met with a group of parents at the start and end of the school day to gather their views on the quality of support provided for their children. A sample of pupils' individual support plans were checked to find out more about the quality and effectiveness of this support.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe were checked including a check of risk assessments and a tour of the school site, to check the suitability of the facilities.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including information available on the school's website and information on pupils' attainment, progress and attendance. The school's self-evaluation summary and development plan were examined, along with external reports.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Morgan

Ofsted Inspector

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