

Inspection of Elleray Park School

Elleray Park Road, Wallasey, Merseyside CH45 0LH

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Elleray Park School is an inspiring place to be. Pupils, and children in the early years, flourish. Each day, they are greeted with a warm smile and a friendly face. Pupils benefit from strong, caring relationships with staff who know them extremely well.

Leaders have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve in their learning and behaviour. Leaders' unrelenting ambition for pupils starts from the moment they join the school. The school's curriculum places no ceiling on pupils' success. It prepares children and pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, exceptionally well for their next steps in education and life in modern Britain.

All pupils behave exceptionally well. This is because staff are highly attuned to the feelings and anxieties of pupils and are successful at minimising them. Staff skilfully help pupils to learn to regulate their behaviour and manage their emotions.

Staff treat pupils with dignity and respect. Bullying is extremely rare. If it should happen, pupils know that adults will deal with any issues immediately and sensitively.

Preparing pupils for the world around them is a top priority. Pupils benefit from an impressive range of activities to promote their wider personal development. Older pupils have the opportunity to attend a residential where they take part in group activities to challenge and inspire them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a highly effective and ambitious curriculum. Learning goals in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are seamlessly interwoven into all aspects of the curriculum. Leaders have expertly created clear learning pathways that exactly pinpoint the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils must learn in order to achieve future success. This well-thought-out and well-designed curriculum helps pupils' achievement to be exceptional.

Teachers are experts at using the information that they have about each pupil to break down learning into small, manageable steps. Staff have a deep understanding of how to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for all pupils. Teachers are highly attuned to how calm or anxious pupils are in lessons. They expertly use this knowledge to maximise moments of engagement or to give pupils a break from learning.

At the heart of the school's work is leaders' determination that all pupils will communicate well. The school's systematic approach to developing communication begins the day children arrive in early years. Adults carefully consider the best way to use the wide range of strategies available to help pupils communicate. For example, they use visual signing and picture-based communication systems to help

pupils build their attention and listening skills, as well as to encourage them to make choices and engage in activities.

Reading and enjoying books and stories has a high profile in school. Those pupils who are not at a developmental stage that enables them to learn phonics, enjoy spoken stories. These stories bring wobbly jelly fish and rainy days to life for pupils by stimulating their senses. Many pupils are encouraged to recognise letter sounds, to form words and eventually read sentences. Staff are trained and are experts in early reading. Expectations are high. There is a determination that all pupils who can will read by the time they leave school at the end of key stage 2. Pupils told inspectors that they were proud to be able to read. They were excited to talk about their favourite books.

Early years staff work closely with parents and carers to build strong, productive relationships. Adults know children really well, which helps children to get off to an excellent start. Staff build strong and trusting relationships which ensure that children settle quickly and flourish.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. All staff recognise negative behaviour is a form of communication. Pupils benefit from staff's highly effective strategies to support their behaviour needs. Over time, they increase their ability to manage their own behaviour. Pupils enjoy a harmonious environment that supports their effective learning. Parents say that their children are eager to come to school in the morning. An enthusiasm for learning extends from children in early years to the oldest pupils.

The school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum provides an exceptional basis for pupils' personal development. All pupils are given an activity passport of over 40 activities and experiences that they will take part in while they are at the school. Experiences range from going to the beach, blowing bubbles, buying an ice cream and planting seeds. Staff are determined that all pupils will access all experiences, even if it means they have to push a wheelchair to the top of a hill. If a pupil cannot go to the theatre, the theatre comes to them in school.

The outstanding school leadership team is supported by a highly effective and experienced governing body. They are successful at holding leaders fully to account. Staff are well supported with their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture throughout school. Leaders and staff are well trained and the procedures in place to identify and report concerns are well understood by staff. Staff are strong advocates for all pupils. They are vigilant in looking for indications that pupils could be at risk of harm, especially as most pupils are unable to communicate easily.

When safeguarding needs are identified, leaders engage very well with external agencies to get timely support for pupils and their families.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about different risks in a way that is appropriate for their age and ability to process information.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	105132
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10277482
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gail Webb
Headteacher	Margaret Morris
Website	www.elleraypark.com
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils at Elleray Park School have an EHC plan. The school caters predominantly for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Many have additional special educational needs, in particular autism spectrum disorder and related communication difficulties. A few pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils also have medical needs.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no two-year-old or three-year-old children in early years.
- Since the last inspection, pupil numbers have increased. The school now operates on two sites. The second site is at Elleray Park School Pensby, Fishers Lane, Pensby CH61 8SD.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, including aspects of early reading; mathematical development; understanding the world and physical development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Where appropriate, inspectors spoke to some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Where appropriate, inspectors spoke with pupils about school life.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The headteacher is also the special educational needs coordinator and the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors also spoke to pathway leads and members of the pastoral team.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of staff, which focused on the well-being and safeguarding of pupils.
- An inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector also spoke on the telephone to two representatives of Wirral local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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