

Inspection of an outstanding school: Hebden Green Community School

Woodford Lane West, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 4EJ

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 March 2024

Outcome

Hebden Green Community School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hebden Green is a happy, caring and harmonious community where pupils feel safe. The school prepares pupils, all of whom have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), exceptionally well for their forthcoming journeys. The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They learn exceptionally well.

Staff forge strong and trusting relationships with pupils based on an acute understanding of their individual needs. This supports pupils to develop their self-regulation skills and their independence particularly well. Pupils feel valued and empowered. They behave in an exemplary manner. Pupils are kind and respectful towards their peers and staff. They demonstrate an unwavering enthusiasm for learning.

Pupils' opinions are not only heard; they are cherished. For example, the school council influences the work of the school, such as by helping to improve the facilities in the dining hall. Pupils embrace a range of activities, such as swimming and football. These help to nurture pupils' confidence and their physical endurance.

Pupils are proud to attend school and eagerly showcase their talents, for example in the school choir, 'Hebden Harmonies'. They learn through real-life experiences that enrich their education, including visits to theatres and museums. They enhance their communication and social skills by visiting local shops and restaurants.

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

The school and the governing body have high aspirations for pupils. The school has meticulously crafted ambitious and flexible curriculum pathways, including for children in the early years. Pupils across the school, including students in the sixth form, follow a diverse array of subjects.

Staff are skilled in identifying pupils' additional needs. They adeptly tailor provision to meet pupils' evolving needs. The school collaborates exceedingly well with a team of

health and therapy professionals to support pupils in overcoming their individual barriers to learning.

Curriculum subjects are designed to give pupils the important knowledge that they need. The school has clarified exactly when topics and concepts will be delivered. This helps to build pupils' understanding across a range of subjects.

Teachers deliver subject curriculums exceptionally well. They provide tailored support for visually impaired pupils, such as using braille. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to present information clearly and to make sure that pupils understand new concepts with ease. Pupils demonstrate resilience while engaging with learning activities. Teachers use assessment strategies effectively to identify any misconceptions that pupils may have. Pupils achieve highly from their different starting points.

The school places pupils' communication and reading at the heart of the curriculum. Staff skilfully use resources, such as pictures, symbols and assistive technologies to help pupils to develop their communication skills. Over time, pupils become competent in communication and language. This helps them to articulate their needs, feelings and choices. Pupils are incredibly well supported to improve their reading skills by trained staff. This continues for as long as required. Pupils successfully segment and blend sounds to spell and read unfamiliar words. They persevere to read with increasing fluency and confidence as they move through school.

Expert staff are sensitive and skilled in helping pupils to manage their own behaviour and emotions. Pupils develop their self-care skills well. For example, they settle quickly into routine tasks and use equipment safely. Pupils learn well in a calm and supportive environment. At lunchtimes, staff help them to eat independently. They form positive friendships with their peers.

The school vigilantly monitors pupils' attendance and follows up any concerns promptly. Pupils' rates of attendance have improved over time. The school does all that it reasonably can to ensure that pupils who have high levels of medical need are well supported to attend school regularly.

The school's work to promote pupils' social and personal development is exemplary. Pupils learn about fundamental British values. They respect the many differences that exist between themselves and others. Pupils receive high-quality support for mental health. They are inspired to participate in a rich tapestry of activities, from volleyball and table cricket to boombox discos and community work. This enables pupils to develop their physical dexterity and cultural understanding.

The school provides expertly tailored careers education and guidance. Older pupils and students benefit from supported work-experience placements. They spoke positively about the support that they receive for college applications. Pupils are steered onto suitable destinations.

Staff form a tight-knit and highly motivated team. They are extremely proud to work at the school. Staff feel well supported with their workload and well-being. Staff, including

those who are new to teaching, are highly appreciative of the time that they receive to improve their practice. Governors are deeply invested in pupils' futures. They strike an appropriate balance of support and challenge in supporting the school's vision of continual improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in July 2014.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	111505
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10274439
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ashley Roberts
Headteacher	Helen Ashley
Website	www.hebdengreen.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who have a diverse set of barriers to their learning, including complex medical and physical conditions, severe to moderate learning needs and communication and social interaction needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school currently provides education for children from the Reception class to pupils in Year 13.
- The school has residential provision, which is inspected by Ofsted separately.
- There have been recent changes to the school's leadership. This includes the headteacher, who was appointed in September 2023.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical-education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector spoke with a multi-disciplinary team of nurses and therapists.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences in school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and reading, mathematics and personal and social development. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector observed some younger pupils read to familiar staff.
- Inspectors met with subject leaders to review other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Farrent

Ofsted Inspector

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