



# Sandfield Park School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 130961  
**LEA** Liverpool  
**Inspection number** 282152  
**Inspection dates** 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Rosemary Eaton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Sandfield Walk
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Liverpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19		Merseyside L12 1LH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 228 0324
<b>Number on roll</b>	192	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 252 1273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Miss M Coghlan
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Hudson

---

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 22 March 2006 - 23 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282152
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Prior to 2003, Sandfield Park was a secondary school for pupils with physical and associated learning difficulties. It now comprises two main elements: the original school and a hospital school, involving the teaching of pupils at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and home tuition for pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons. The total number on roll fluctuates on a daily basis. When necessary, the hospital school caters for children in the Foundation Stage. Pupils travel from all over Liverpool to the main school and the hospital serves Merseyside and North Wales. Around 40 pupils from Liverpool are taught in their homes. In the main school, nearly half of the 74 pupils receive free school meals, which is a high proportion. Most pupils are white British, with very small numbers from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school with a number of outstanding features, providing good value for money. The inspectors agreed with the school's view of its overall effectiveness and most aspects of its work. The school judged the curriculum too harshly; it is outstanding rather than good. Pupils achieve well; those that are older, and sixth form students, gain a wide range of external accreditation. This is the result of good teaching, providing relevant and motivating activities. However, the quality of individual education plans is inconsistent. Often, targets are not sufficiently precise to enable outcomes to be accurately measured. The school provides additional tuition for any children in the Foundation Stage who attend the hospital school and as a result, they achieve well. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They develop into confident and sociable young people. The curriculum is highly responsive to pupils' particular circumstances. A large number of visits, visitors, and clubs support pupils' academic work and personal development. Pupils feel very secure in school as a result of the outstanding care they receive. The school is well led and managed, with outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher. He takes a strong lead in checking how well the school is performing. Other staff are playing increasingly important roles in self-evaluation, but acknowledge the need for training in order to perform these tasks more effectively. Significant improvement has taken place since the previous inspection, during a period of considerable change. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form is good. The school judged it to be outstanding, but did not take sufficient account of the contribution made in Years 7 to 11 in enabling pupils to develop into confident young adults. Students build successfully on their previous learning, following a wide range of accredited courses leading, for example, to Youth Awards at Bronze or Silver level, 'Towards Independence' certification and Adult Literacy and Numeracy entry level awards. They are prepared extremely well for their future lives; for instance, visiting a number of colleges and taking part in work experience placements. Staff consistently encourage students to develop into well-rounded individuals.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the consistency of individual education plans so they are always useful in helping teachers decide what to teach next.
- Ensure teachers develop further their leadership and management skills in order to play a full part in tasks such as checking the quality of teaching.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities or interruptions to their education due to ill-health, pupils' standards overall are significantly below those found in mainstream schools. However, they make good progress and achieve well throughout the school, including in the Foundation Stage. The school sets challenging targets for individuals to progress through the national curriculum levels at which they work and for examination successes. These are frequently met and sometimes exceeded.

Progress in literacy is especially good. This is because, in addition to timetabled English and reading lessons, teachers promote reading actively through other subjects. In physical education, pupils are regularly successful in local, national, and international events, several recently winning medals for their country at the Special Olympics. In Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, most of the pupils' achievements are recognised through national accreditation. For instance, depending on their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Year 11 pupils are successful in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) mathematics, science and art, entry Level courses, units of accreditation and the 'Transition Challenge' course. In the hospital school, disturbances to pupils' education are minimised, so their progress is either sustained or accelerated. Those who have been unable to attend school owing to psychological problems re-engage with learning and often return to mainstream education.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding. Their consideration for others extends to supporting a wide range of causes. Throughout the school, pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy their time at school, particularly valuing their friendships with each other. In the hospital school, pupils put aside their medical problems to a remarkable degree and focus on their learning. Attendance is good. Absences are usually linked to ill health. Pupils know the importance of living a healthy lifestyle; the school council has successfully considered how school meals could be healthier. Pupils take part enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities. They say incidents of racism and bullying are rare and they know what to do if these do occur. Behaviour is outstanding. Representatives from the school have attended the Liverpool Schools' Parliament and have inspired others to support a recycling project. European days, participation in the Capital of Culture bid, and an African dance project, for example, lead to the broadening of pupils' understanding of different cultures; enterprise activities effectively raise their economic awareness. Currently, a course relating to the 'Fair Trade' movement is helping sixth form students to appreciate ethical issues and increase their sense of being part of the world community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Throughout the school, the relationships teachers have with pupils are excellent and contribute significantly to creating an atmosphere in which pupils are confident to tackle challenging work. For instance, in an art lesson, Year 11 pupils did their utmost to overcome their physical disabilities as they made coil pots. Lessons frequently involve the use of information and communication technology (ICT), motivating pupils and supporting learning in most subjects; for example, by providing alternatives to writing by hand. Mostly, pupils are kept busy but, occasionally, when the pace of learning slows, pupils are not always fully occupied. Activities are usually highly relevant to pupils' ages and interests and matched well to their particular learning needs. A range of recording systems provides information about the levels at which pupils work as they move up through the school. Information is analysed and used effectively by senior staff; for example, to identify when pupils require additional support or challenge. However, the English and mathematics targets in individual education plans lack precision. Where they are not sharp or particularly useful, they do not add to teachers' knowledge of how well pupils are learning and, therefore, what next to teach.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. It is used to respond flexibly to each pupil's academic, personal, and medical needs. In the hospital school, the excellent partnerships with medical colleagues and pupils' home schools ensure the curriculum meets individual needs. Throughout the school, the highly relevant emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT, supports pupils' progress in all aspects of their work. In addition, specific courses are designed to develop independence, daily living skills and to equip pupils with strategies to overcome their particular challenges. In the sixth form, the strong focus on preparation for employment and leisure is both necessary and very effective. The exceptional range of enrichment activities add to pupils' enjoyment and enhance their learning and personal development. Including residential experiences and extensive physical activities, they enable pupils to develop leadership skills, for example, and prepare for independent living in the future.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school is rigorous in doing all it can to keep pupils safe. Risks to health and safety are meticulously assessed and firm action taken where needed. All staff understand child protection procedures. Pupils discuss personal safety and how to deal with danger. They feel they could approach any member of staff for help. The learning mentor provides highly effective support

for pupils and their parents. Issues such as healthy lifestyles and puberty are explored sensitively to enable pupils to make informed choices. Detailed guidance and collaboration with hospital staff ensure that all pupils, for instance, those who may behave unpredictably as a result of medical conditions, are supported confidently. Parents of pupils in the hospital school are particularly appreciative regarding the ability of staff to provide normality in distressing circumstances. With strong support from the Connexions adviser, pupils are prepared extremely well for progression after school. Those taught at home are gradually re-introduced to learning alongside other pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good overall; the headteacher provides outstanding leadership. By leaving nothing to chance and through strenuous efforts, he is continuing to bring together the different components of the school in order to ensure that every pupil has equally good opportunities for achievement and personal development. An extensive range of systems, including the collection of parents' and pupils' views, keep the headteacher informed about how well all aspects of the school are performing, although individual education plans do not make a sufficiently significant contribution to the overall picture. Effective self-evaluation feeds into the comprehensive and detailed school development plan, which has enabled the school to move on well since the previous inspection. Increasingly, responsibilities are being devolved to the senior team and subject coordinators; the school has identified the need to provide training in order to help staff carry out tasks such as checking on and improving the quality of teaching. Governors are well informed and keen to develop their own knowledge so they can support the school even further. They consider spending decisions carefully, helping to provide good value for money. The school is very outward looking and its partnerships with other professionals, agencies and schools are exceptionally good. The school is generous with its own resources and expertise, for instance, welcoming pupils from other schools to join lessons. Parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts. Those of one pupil wrote that sending their son to Sandfield Park was the 'best decision they ever made'.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our short time at Sandfield Park.

What we liked most about your school:

- you all work very hard and learn a lot during lessons
- the oldest pupils pass many different exams
- the staff arrange plenty of interesting activities and visits
- you do your best to be as independent as possible, look out for each other, and try hard to be good citizens
- the staff work very hard to make sure you are all safe and happy in school
- Mr Hudson is an outstanding headteacher
- your parents think you go to a good school and we agree with them.

What we have asked your school to do next:

- make sure that individual education plans help teachers to measure how well every pupil is learning and to decide what to teach next
- involve more teachers in finding out how well the school is working.