

Hayfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105128
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	287130
Inspection dates	6–7 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Arif Hussain

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Cooper
Headteacher	Ms S Lowy
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002
School address	Manor Drive Upton Wirral Merseyside CH49 4LN
Telephone number	0151 677 9303
Fax number	0151 677 3981

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Hayfield provides primary education for girls and boys who have statements of special educational need. Most have moderate learning difficulties. However, the proportion with more complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased since the last inspection. At present, about a third of pupils have severe communication difficulties including autistic spectrum disorders. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups but none has English as an additional language. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the National Healthy Schools Award, and the Activemark. It also has Investors in People Award, National Autistic Society Accreditation and the Wirral Inclusion Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstandingly effective school. Parents rate it very highly and credit the staff with helping their children to grow in confidence by providing so well for pupils' emotional, social and academic needs. The standards of children entering the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) are, because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, well below those expected for their age. However, they make good progress towards their early learning goals. In Key Stages 1 and 2, while pupils' standards remain below age related expectations, their progress is exceptional. They make very rapid gains in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). This excellent achievement is brought about by the outstanding quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are very enthusiastic and this rubs off on pupils, making them very interested in their work and eager to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants are very highly trained in meeting the wide range of learning needs found within the school. This ensures that individual pupils are provided for very well.

The school's success is underpinned by particularly effective relationships with parents and the wider community. Links with mainstream schools are firmly established through the school's highly regarded outreach services. These enable others to access the school's wealth of knowledge and expertise, especially in working with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Around a quarter of pupils attend mainstream schools to take part in a wide variety of learning activities. Mainstream inclusion was the only issue identified for improvement at the last inspection and the school has addressed it very well.

Personal development is outstanding because pupils receive excellent care, support and guidance. Pupils blossom into very mature, caring and considerate young citizens. The curriculum is good and meets pupils' needs and interests well. Pupils love school and this is reflected in outstanding rates of attendance and excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles particularly well. There is a very high level of participation in activities such as 'brain gym', lunchtime sports and horse riding. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and say that there is no bullying. Their contribution to the community is excellent. The school council has a very strong voice and has made excellent suggestions for school improvement. Play leaders take their roles very seriously. They sum up their duties succinctly by saying, 'We help the little ones by sorting out games and making sure they don't fall down in the playground.' Pupils are especially well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's clear vision and determination for excellence has been instrumental in improving the school since the last inspection. All leaders, managers and staff share a common sense of purpose. They place pupils' progress and well-being above all else and work very effectively in partnership with other agencies to ensure this. Procedures to safeguard learners meet government requirements and are reviewed frequently. There is exemplary commitment to equality of opportunity and to the elimination of discrimination so that all pupils can do as well as possible. Governance is outstanding. The governing body is very supportive and has successfully pursued initiatives such as healthy eating. The school checks pupils' achievements very thoroughly, recording even the smallest gains in knowledge and understanding. Any underperformance is identified quickly and is very effectively addressed through excellent support. The school was judged as very good at the last inspection. Many positive developments since then demonstrate an excellent improvement and capacity to continue to improve. Resources are used very effectively and efficiently. The school provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is effective and ensures that children make a good start to school life. Children settle into learning routines very quickly because of the very positive learning ethos and excellent staff support. The great majority of children make good progress in all areas of learning including communication, mathematical, personal and social development. Children make excellent progress in their creative and physical development. Teaching is good and, on occasions, outstanding. Good improvements have taken place since the last inspection, as a result of strong leadership and management. The curriculum is good. However, insufficient use is made of the sensory room to broaden the learning experiences and improve the progress of children who would particularly benefit from this resource.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in the Foundation Stage, especially in communication, mathematical and personal and social development so that there is excellent progress in all areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils entering Year 1 are well prepared to learn. Whatever their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, they make excellent progress by the time they leave in Year 6.

The school focuses strongly on communication and language development and so pupils make exceptional progress in this area. Pupils who have little or no oral language learn to make excellent use of symbols, pictures and aids that enable them to organise their thoughts, understand others and make themselves understood. Every opportunity is taken to promote a love of books and this has resulted in excellent progress in reading. A class-led assembly about the Second World War illustrated the effective use the school makes of role play to develop speaking. Pupils gave stunning performances. Immaculately dressed, the soldiers, civilians and evacuees spoke very clearly as they proudly played out their roles.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development makes an excellent contribution to learning. They are strongly committed to fairness and equality. They are often very moved by injustice or inspired by what they learn about human achievements. Recent class writing about the Second World War includes this deeply felt verse written in response to the story of Anne Frank.

'Made to wear a star, unkind, unkind, unkind. Never be unkind to Jews again, remember, remember, remember. Anne Frank and family died but father and diary survived. Thanks, thanks, thanks'.

At every opportunity pupils spontaneously celebrate each other's achievements with warm applause. Relationships between pupils are excellent. Parents confirm that their children are managed especially well and that behaviour is excellent. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils understand that they live in a multi-ethnic society and that there is a need to maintain good race relations.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Excellent features of teaching include the emphasis on developing communication and basic skills, effective use of learning resources, presentation that captures and sustains pupils' interest and a brisk pace in lessons. Consequently, pupils are engaged very well in learning and achieve especially well. Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to the success of lessons through very skilful support. Pupils evidently enjoy sharing their views and ideas with others and are frequently on the edge of their seats as they excitedly answer teachers' questions. Assessment and marking of work are outstanding. The information collected is used very effectively to ensure that all pupils reach challenging targets. Teachers keep pupils informed about how well they are getting on and what they will need to do in order to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum overall is good with some outstanding features in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Very good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT helps all pupils to prepare especially well for the future. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is excellent for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and results in exceptional personal development outcomes. Pupils enjoy many sports including swimming, golf and judo. This makes a very good contribution to physical development. Visits out of school are plentiful and support cultural development very well. Residential opportunities are good because several year groups can take part in activities designed to support learning and develop independence. Visitors include an advanced skills French teacher who works with classes once a week. Creativity in learning is effectively promoted through art, music and dance. For junior pupils the sensory room is well used to support specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, children in the Foundation Stage have missed out on this opportunity and have only recently begun to have their learning enriched by use of the sensory room.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are greatly impressed by the care and guidance the school gives to their children. One parent wrote to the inspector, which is typical of the views of others, to say, 'My daughter was a very timid child with specific development difficulties. She has made excellent progress and is now happy and outgoing. She has made giant strides in her learning because of the wonderful support she is given.' Arrangements to ensure child protection, health and safety are securely in place. Risk assessments are undertaken to ensure that the learning experiences the school offers to its pupils are as safe as possible. High levels of staff training ensure that pupils receive skilful and very effective support. This is a key factor in pupils' outstanding personal development and helps them to achieve as well as they can. Pupils respond especially well to incentives and rewards for good behaviour and achievement. Celebration assemblies are frequently held and are very effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The school's excellent links with medical practitioners, therapists and advisory groups are very effective in promoting the well-being of pupils and their families, particularly the most vulnerable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership of the school is very successfully focused on achievement and promoting the personal development and well-being of all pupils. There is a common sense of purpose set by the governors and the leadership across the school. Inclusion is at the heart of the school's work. Excellent checking of pupils' achievements ensures that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can, including vulnerable pupils and pupils from different ethnic minority groups. Target-setting systems for pupils are very rigorous and successful. The quality of teaching and learning is checked frequently to make sure that as much progress as possible is made in lessons. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and closely matches inspection findings. The school deservedly has an excellent reputation in the community. The number of glowing letters from parents about this school is very impressive. Resources such as interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to support learning. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis with office staff making an excellent contribution.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Hayfield School, Wirral, CH49 4LN

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and you were all very helpful. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out about Hayfield School.

You told me how happy you are at school. This is because the teachers and other adults make sure you are safe and provide lots of good things for you to do. You know what you need to do in order to be healthy and safe. Your behaviour is excellent and you are very good citizens. I was very impressed with the work of the school council and the way they help everyone. Well done! You have excellent teachers and this is why you all learn such a lot.

I really enjoyed the assembly about the Second World War. What wonderful acting! I was very impressed with the poems you have written about Anne Frank. Well done!

The headteacher, staff and governors all work very hard indeed to make sure you all keep learning so quickly. Your parents and carers think Hayfield is a brilliant school and I agree with them. It is outstanding!

In order to improve your brilliant school further, I have asked your headteacher and her staff to help those of you who are in the Foundation Stage to do even better, especially in developing your communication, mathematical and personal and social skills.