



# Chorley Astley Park School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 119877  
**Local Authority** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 291556  
**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Eric Craven HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Harrington Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Chorley, Lancashire
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–16		PR7 1JZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01257 262227
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	111	<b>Fax number</b>	01257 269074
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lynda Smith
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John McAndrew
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2002		

---

<b>Age group</b> 4–16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24–25 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 291556
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2007

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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

## Description of the school

Although designated a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties the needs of the pupils are quite diverse and include those with severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and some with associated emotional and behaviour difficulties. All of the pupils have statements of special educational need. About a third are entitled to a free school meal, which is about twice the national average. There are twice as many boys as girls. About half of the students in the secondary department arrive in Year 7 or later from mainstream schools. The school is located in the Chorley area of Lancashire, although just over half of the pupils come from other districts in the county. The school has gained both Lancashire and National Healthy Schools Status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspectors share the view of the vast majority of parents that this is a good school. Although there are some shortcomings, they are outweighed by its many strengths. From very low starting points, most pupils make good progress throughout their time at the school and all those leaving in Year 11 do so with some form of external accreditation. Pupils receiving the Better Reading Partners intervention programme make outstanding progress. Pupils make good progress for three main reasons. Firstly, they thrive in an upbeat atmosphere where good relationships abound. Secondly, the curriculum is well matched to their needs with strong and suitable emphases placed on the acquisition of literacy and life skills. Finally, good teaching engages and motivates the pupils and as a consequence, they enjoy school and learn well.

The behaviour and attitude of pupils are outstanding overall, although a few sometimes exhibit pockets of silliness. Behaviour management systems are consistently applied and as a consequence, pupils who arrive at the school with behaviour difficulties learn to manage their behaviour well and to cooperate with others.

Pupils have an appreciation of keeping healthy and they engage in a range of physical activities. They respond well to the teaching of health and safety matters and they understand the fundamentals of keeping safe. Their contribution to the local and wider community is good. They appreciate that they have roles and responsibilities in society and readily raise money for charities and some help out in local nurseries and old people's homes. A good focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), along with the effective teaching of independence and life skills, promotes the pupils' future economic well-being to good effect. The 'enterprise' activities undertaken by Year 10 pupils, for example, in running the healthy tuck shop add a great deal to their personal and social development and to their understanding of the world of work. Themed weeks for safety, anti-bullying and physical activity, alongside a good personal and social education (PSHE) programme, ensure that health and safety matters receive due attention. The school's arrangements to ensure the security and safety of the pupils are comprehensive and well monitored. Academic guidance is satisfactory, although not all pupils know and understand their immediate goals. The guidance and support given to the pupils in preparation for life beyond school are outstanding; they are well prepared through careers education and guidance, tailored work experiences and one to one meetings with staff and other agencies.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The school is effectively managed and runs in an orderly fashion. Routines are well established and systems operate smoothly. The headteacher has an appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there are sound evaluation arrangements, which help compile the annual school development plan. Nevertheless, there are few drawbacks that need attention. Although the assessment of individual pupils is good, the use of pupil assessment information to evaluate the progress made by groups of pupils is at a very early stage of development. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not systematic enough and could make more of a contribution to improving the quality of teaching

and learning and subsequently the achievements of the pupils. Heads of departments and subject leaders lead their areas well but are hampered by not being sufficiently involved in evaluating the quality of teaching and by the lack of whole-school data on pupil progress. The school is aware of these deficiencies and has begun to implement plans to overcome them. The experienced governing body has developed its role considerably since the last inspection. Governors are committed, supportive and well informed so they are in a good position to ask searching questions of the school. They perform their roles well.

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

- Make better use of pupil progress data at a whole-school level.
- Fully implement performance management arrangements by systematically monitoring the quality teaching.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Due to their learning difficulties and sometime because of their chequered educational histories, pupils arrive at the school with standards well below those expected nationally for their age. The pupils get a very good start in the primary department and because they are keen to learn they make good progress overall as they move through the school. The school's records, examination of pupils' work and observations of pupils in lessons show that many pupils make good progress in their National Curriculum subjects and outstanding progress in their personal and social development. Even though all pupils achieve external accreditation in Year 11, the school has recognised that some could be stretched further and are potentially capable of GCSE accreditation.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The great majority of pupils have good attendance and enjoy coming to the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and there are very few disturbances in lessons or around the school. Because of the school's emphatic stance on teaching personal and social skills, their moral and social awareness are outstanding. Assemblies, PSHE and educational visits help develop the pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding, which are judged to be good. Pupils actively participate in decision-making in school and in activities related to the local and wider community. They work well as members of a team sharing their views and efforts to reach team goals. They generally show respect for each other and are willing to offer support to their peers and are keen to celebrate the successes of others.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall. However, it is variable and includes some outstanding teaching and some that is satisfactory. Staff have received extensive training to meet the needs of a changing population of pupils and in the best lessons this is evident when staff are well prepared, when learning is active and when artefacts, role play and interactive whiteboards are used to motivate the pupils. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons they see as relevant to them and in these they are keen to listen to staff, try hard and to make contributions themselves. For example, in an ICT lesson, which they enjoyed enormously, they created a database to chart the price of different pizza toppings. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the pupils and devise activities that meet their needs. Occasionally, however, materials are used that are inappropriate to the age and interests of some pupils. The work of teaching assistants is consistently good. They work harmoniously with teachers to support the pupils and yet are careful to ensure that pupils' independence is encouraged. They are also very effective in delivering teaching programmes such as enterprise and reading intervention. A strong feature of the effective behaviour management system is the use of rewards. These are meaningful to the pupils and they work hard and behave well to achieve their merits.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. The National Curriculum is adapted well to ensure that the structure and content of the school's curriculum has been planned and organised to reflect the needs of the pupils. The primary department teach much of the curriculum through a topic approach, which effectively helps the pupils to understand how their learning in one area relates to learning elsewhere. Throughout the school, basic literacy, numeracy and ICT are given a high priority and they are taught well across subjects as well as in their own right. The curriculum is enhanced by catch-up programmes for some pupils such as Better Reading Partners and the Social Use of Language. The school participates in local events like the Youth Music Festival and Youth Games and these play a big part in developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Visits and visitors are used well to enliven the curriculum and to reinforce life skills. Regular educational outings promote personal and social development extremely effectively. The range of lunchtime clubs is good and includes activities to interest all of the pupils. The value attached to these is seen in the high participation rates.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. What each pupil needs and is entitled to is central in the school's philosophy. Pupils are highly valued and cared for by all staff. An atmosphere of support and praise pervades lessons. Health and safety procedures are good and the school provides a vibrant and healthy environment to promote learning. Healthy eating is prominent in the school's work but a wider choice of food at lunchtime for the pupils would help them apply their understanding of healthy eating even more. Well considered child protection procedures are in place and are well monitored. Pupils relate very well to adults and they know they can get help if they need it. Procedures for new pupils starting at the school are strong and transition arrangements for pupils leaving school are particularly good. There is a real sense that the school prepares pupils for life after school. Their progress is tracked and targets are used to help most pupils understand what the next steps are. However, some pupils are not fully aware of their targets and what these mean.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

This is a school which runs very smoothly, where relationships are strong and where the pupils make good progress overall. This is because leadership and management are good. Parents particularly applaud the way pupils are inducted into the school, the support provided by staff for the pupils and their families and the school's use of rewards and celebrations of success. Reflecting the views of others one wrote about her child, 'She is very happy going to school and can approach any member of staff with an issue and it is dealt with efficiently'. Another commented, 'I particularly like how they give merit certificates and reward hard work and behaviour'. The school's development plan is a sound roadmap in addressing the school's immediate priorities. It is informed by annual audits and by seeking the views of pupils and parents. Resources are used effectively and evaluations undertaken to demonstrate value for money; for example, reports are taken to the governing body about effectiveness of initiatives such as 'enterprise' activities. Members of the governing body are linked to subject coordinators and more recently have been linked to departments so they can be well informed about the performance of the school. The school has successfully addressed the points for development following its last inspection with the exception of increasing the opportunities for pupils to work and socialise with their mainstream peers, which has been restricted. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

**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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Chorley Astley Park School

Harrington Road

Chorley

Lancashire

PR7 1JZ

26 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Many thanks for the warm welcome you gave Mr Torr and me when we inspected your school this week. Particular thanks go to the school council who met with Mr Torr to share their views about the school.

We think your school is good, which is a view most of the parents who wrote to us had as well. We especially like the way most of you behave very well and we were pleased to see you getting on with the staff and your class mates. Your learning is good because you pay attention in lessons and because many of the lessons are made really interesting for you. We saw lots of good teaching, which used the interactive whiteboards, got you to role play so you could get involved and we saw a particularly good lesson in ICT where some of you made a database about pizza toppings.

We think the staff care for you and look after you well. They are concerned about your safety and security and they check regularly to make sure the things you do are safe. We think that the teaching assistants who work with you are doing a great job in helping to support you when you need it but also in trying to help you become as independent as possible. We were very impressed by the way the school works with you and your parents when you are nearly ready to leave school, so that your move into life after school is as smooth as possible. The things you do to help others, for example, through raising money for charities or helping at the old peoples' home, are helping you to understand that we all have responsibilities to help others.

There are a couple of things we've asked Mr McAndrew, the staff and governors to do to make the school even better. We would like them to make more use of the information they have about the progress you make and we think that if staff watched other teacher's lessons more regularly and then talked about what was good and what could be better then teaching could improve even more.

Good wishes and good luck to you all.

Eric Craven

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools