

Knowsley Central Primary Support Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104500
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	324064
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Pauline Hilling-Smith

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	55
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Donnelly
Headteacher	Mrs T Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mossbrow Road Huyton Liverpool Merseyside L36 7SY

Age group	2–11
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2009
Inspection number	324064

Telephone number
Fax number

0151 4778450
0151 4899154

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The centre is a special school, which provides education for up to 56 pupils between 4 and 11 years of age who live in the Knowsley area. The pupils have complex needs including learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and each has a statement of special educational need. The nature of the learners' difficulties means they are working below national expectations. The school draws pupils mainly from areas of significant social disadvantage. Some pupils are in the care of the local authority. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Central to the school's provision is an area-wide integrated multi-professional support team (CAST) which links with other teams, including health and social services to provide a wide range of coordinated services to children and families. This includes integrated support for 25 primary and 3 secondary schools for pupils who are experiencing some degree of difficulty in mainstream schools. As part of this provision, there are 36 places at the centre for pupils from other schools who attend one day a week to receive specialist teaching for specific learning difficulties. The school has gained a number of awards including the Mayor's Award, Investors in People, Healthy Schools and Eco status. The school provides extended services for its pupils and their parents and carers, such as family learning programmes and a breakfast club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The centre is outstanding in every respect. A consistent focus on high expectations and exceptional quality, over time, results in excellence being the norm. Everyone associated with the centre knows that they are important as individuals, which inspires confidence and emotional well-being. Promoting pupils' individual qualities with a focus on learning means that pupils enjoy school greatly and outstanding achievement is clearly evident. The centre continues to be committed to inclusion and promotes this most effectively by providing a 'one-stop' integrated support service to children and families and schools in the central areas of the borough. There is excellent capacity to continue to improve.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are outstanding because opportunities presented are so closely tailored for each pupil. As a result, they always work to their potential and no opportunity is lost for pupils to achieve their best. This is because the detailed and frequent assessments made by the staff of pupils' progress, enable them to consistently plan and share with pupils their next learning steps. The curriculum is enriched and extended by visits, specialist visitors and specialist coaches and includes planned extended activities and clubs, which provide further opportunities for pupils to learn and achieve. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed so that most potential outbursts are averted and a calm working atmosphere is maintained. Pupils learn very well how to be responsible members of their own and the wider community. Through meaningful discussions with the staff, pupils' emotional well-being and problem-solving skills are developed exceptionally well. Pupils make very sensible choices to lead a healthy lifestyle and are extremely aware of how to stay safe in their own context.

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. For the most vulnerable pupils, superb strategies and interventions are quickly put in place. Pupils are clear about their targets and what they should do to improve. The commitment of all the staff ensures that positive relationships and patience underpin all discussions. Parents are very appreciative about the communication that they have with the centre and the progress their children make. Safeguarding procedures are carefully attended to and meet requirements so that pupils feel safe and secure.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides exemplary clear leadership of this multi-dimensional provision. She is supported by a very strong leadership team and governing body and together their impact on the achievement of pupils with complex needs is great. Self-evaluation is very robust and the leadership is clear about what needs to be done to maintain the excellent improvement momentum. The headteacher has developed staff teams, which are well trained and drive each aspect of provision very well. Team members are highly skilled and strongly motivated and share a common sense of purpose. Improvement since the last inspection has been outstanding. Use of resources and value for money is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. There are a small number of pupils at this stage, entering from extremely low starting points. Children's progress in communication is particularly impressive and forms a platform for their achievement in all areas of learning, including Spanish! Outstanding leadership and management ensure that the children's safety and well-being are a top priority. Planning to meet the welfare and learning needs of the children is very good. There is an extremely good balance between high quality

activities that are taught and those which children choose. This enables children to make an outstanding start. Staff work together very well and are skilful in extending children's language and promoting their thinking and learning skills. Children have enormous fun learning, for instance, about the properties of rainwater. They stamp in puddles, dabble their fingers in the water and run up and down a stream as the rain pours off a canopy. Activities are described in sequences using symbols so the children are able to read and understand when they have completed activities and what there is to do next. All children enjoy the daily range of activities provided in the outdoor area. Personal and social development is often exceptional. The children benefit from learning and playing with slightly older children in the centre as well as mixing with children from a neighbouring children's centre. Parents are involved as partners in helping to develop, for example, their children's language skills.

What the school should do to improve further

The school is continuing to build on its excellence and is well aware of what it needs to do in the future. Therefore, there are no set areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. From very low starting points all pupils consistently make rapid gains in their learning and a small number of pupils attain national averages in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. All pupils, regardless of their specialist needs or background, make excellent progress in their learning throughout their time at the centre. Detailed, careful assessments are carried out for each pupil when they arrive at the centre, which establishes clear starting points. Personalised learning plans are then put in place, based on individual pupils' needs. These plans include challenging targets in all areas of the curriculum and personal development. Most pupils make exceptional progress in their social development. This removes one of the barriers to learning they experience and allows them to excel. Pupils attain or exceed high expectations because their progress and targets are consistently monitored to ensure they are making the desired progress. Changes made to the learning plans, based on detailed evaluation of the impact of what is taught, ensure that no pupil slips behind. Meaningful discussions with all staff throughout the day ensure that pupils deepen their thinking and are very clear about what they need to do to improve. The special talents of all of the pupils are carefully nurtured and it is evident that some pupils exceed well beyond what might be expected of them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good. Pupils benefit greatly from the excellent provision made to promote their awareness of their own emotions. Consequently, they come to understand and manage their own feelings and behaviour very well. They speak with poignant directness of the need to consider others both within the community of the school and in the wider world. Furthermore, they take action to help. Recently, for example, they made, by ballot, a mature judgement based on clear criteria about which charity amongst a group of very worthy causes most deserved their support. They chose to give the money they had collected to a medical charity because they understood that the right to life and health is paramount and precedes the right to shelter or to education. Pupils are tolerant and support one another very effectively. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, for example, encourage and help their friends, including those with autistic spectrum

disorders when they are distressed. Pupils are very knowledgeable about keeping fit and healthy. They practice healthy eating both at school and at home and are very keen to join in the many opportunities for physical activity that the school provides. Pupils feel very safe at school and trust the adults who teach and care for them. They behave safely in school and know that they must not put themselves or others at risk. They develop the personal and learning skills that will support them in later stages of their education. Their attendance is extremely good, which is a very good indication of how much they enjoy coming to school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils make exceptional progress in their work and develop first-rate learning skills, because the quality of teaching is consistently very high. Teachers assess their pupils thoroughly. They set targets, that while challenging, take full account of each pupil's individual capabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants develop and maintain excellent, friendly relationships with pupils. This gives their pupils great confidence and enables them to flourish and to try out new skills without being afraid to fail. The work of teaching assistants is excellent. They guide their pupils extremely well and provide them with the support they need. They are very effective in taking the lead in teaching in some sessions. Management of behaviour is outstanding. Staff know the pupils so well that they are able to pick up signs of potential difficulties at a very early stage. They make use of a broad range of strategies to defuse tense situations so that learning is not disrupted. Planned activities are very imaginative and greatly varied so that pupils learn as much through doing, as through seeing and listening. It is very clear that they thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Very productive use is made of all resources. Artefacts and information and communication technology (ICT) are used particularly well. Through supportive dialogue, teachers help pupils to understand how well they are getting on and what they must do to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A key feature of the excellent curriculum is that it is personalised for each pupil. As such, it meets their individual needs and interests very well, in addition to meeting statutory requirements. The recent re-arrangement of the curriculum into 'families' mean that pupils can identify clear links between subjects and this helps them to achieve exceptionally well. They find the curriculum exciting and enjoyable because they have ownership of their learning and because it is enriched by numerous visits and visitors. As pupils make progress through school, the creative curriculum builds extremely well on their previous learning. Pupils extend their personal development by gaining an in-depth understanding of ways in which they can contribute to the school community. For example, council members wear a different coloured sweatshirt and observe the confidentiality of pupils' discussions. The curriculum promotes a clear understanding of safety and health, and pupils can join in a daily 'wake and shake' session on arrival to school. As well as excellent specialised provision for specific learning difficulties, the development of pupils' basics skills is identified and promoted in all subjects. The provision for ICT contributes extremely well to the skills pupils need for future learning. The school provides residential opportunities, as well as a wide range of clubs. These enable pupils to socialise and learn outside of school hours.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The exceptional provision made by the school for care, guidance and support is one of its greatest strengths. All who work at the school are dedicated to ensuring that pupils are safe and healthy. Procedures for child protection, which are reviewed regularly, are clear and understood by staff. Thorough risk assessments are made when required. Through the school's vigilance, action is taken with energy and purpose to marshal the support of all relevant agencies when needed. The staff guide and support pupils exceptionally well. There are very well planned programmes to enable pupils to recognise and understand their feelings and where necessary manage their behaviour. Pupils' personal development blossoms as a result of this provision. Pupils' progress is rigorously checked by their teachers. Pupils are extremely well informed about what they must do to achieve their learning and personal targets. Liaison with other schools and with outside agencies is excellent. It contributes greatly to pupils' social development. Parents readily say that the school consults and works in partnership with them and they play a full part in setting targets when their children's statements of special educational need are reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The partnership of the headteacher and associate headteacher is extremely effective in promoting the excellent provision. Parents are unanimous in their support for the quality of education that the school provides. In fact, one parent remarked that they wished their child could stay forever. Leaders at all levels contribute to rigorous monitoring and evaluation. As a result, self-evaluation is highly accurate. Governance is excellent and the governors support and challenge the school as well as overseeing its performance and holding leadership to account. Capacity to improve is outstanding. Procedures for safeguarding are rigorous and regularly reviewed. The school is a hub of excellence for Knowsley Central Area. The headteacher and outreach manager direct and plan an impressive support framework which impacts significantly on standards and inclusion across the centre and many schools. This seamless partnership has a massive impact on equality of opportunity and on community cohesion. Innovative practice and expertise across the team ensure that opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level are in place and it removes barriers to access and participation. Opportunities for pupils to develop citizenship within the curriculum are extensive and links with Africa and the elderly promote an understanding of other communities very well.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Knowsley Central Primary Support Centre, Liverpool,
L36 7SY

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed our time with you very much. This is what we found out.

The centre is an outstanding school.

You are very grown up in the way you treat each other and the way the school council works to make the school a happy community. We were really impressed by the way you decided which charity to support with the funds you raised.

The centre staff makes sure that they always plan exciting things for you to do and learn and they make sure that you get all the support and care you need to succeed, so that you can shine like the star in your motto.

Your headteacher, governors and staff work very hard to make the school better and better. We want to send them and each one of you our good wishes for the future.