

Orrets Meadow School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105140
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	324166
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Saleem 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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Bourne
Headteacher	Mrs S Blythe
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
School address	Chapelhill Road Moreton Wirral Merseyside CH46 9QQ
Telephone number	0151 6788070
Fax number	0151 6774663

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school caters for pupils who have specific learning difficulties. These include difficulties with memory and coordination. Many pupils have additional emotional difficulties which can manifest themselves in frustration, anxiety, withdrawal or anti-social behaviour. A significant proportion of pupils also exhibit other additional difficulties, for example, in paying attention. Around a fifth of pupils are on the autistic spectrum. On average, pupils stay at the school for approximately two years before returning to mainstream education when it is deemed appropriate. Currently, several pupils attend the school each morning on a part-time basis and return to their mainstream school in the afternoon. The school also operates an outreach service for mainstream schools across the Wirral.

A significant proportion of pupils are from socially and economically disadvantaged areas, with around a third eligible for free school meals. The number of minority ethnic pupils is very small, and none is at the early stages of learning English. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Award, Sportsmark and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school provides excellent value for money. Representative views from parents include, 'we feel that our son has made outstanding progress; this has affected not just his life, but ours too; the teachers are truly gifted'. Though attainment on entry to the school is low, pupils reach standards that are broadly average for their age. This represents outstanding achievement. Progress is excellent because the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers develop strong relationships with pupils remarkably quickly and so get the very best out of them. Constant praise and encouragement in lessons ensure that pupils are extremely well motivated in their learning. Teachers have an excellent understanding of pupils' learning difficulties and structure the lessons in a way that captures and sustains their interest.

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 which enable others to access the wealth of knowledge and expertise the school has, for example, regarding autism. Along with the school's sterling success in celebrating diversity and ensuring equality, these factors illustrate its outstanding work to promote community cohesion.

Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils develop very high levels of self-esteem and confidence. Teaching assistants provide skilful support in the classroom that enables all pupils to learn very well.

The curriculum is outstanding. Pupils love the vast array of exciting and innovative learning chances which are precisely matched to their needs. The provision for developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy secures very rapid progress. The very wide range of school clubs, educational visits and visitors provide sparkling additions to the classroom experiences on offer.

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils are very thoughtful, polite and well mannered. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school life very much and this is reflected in outstanding attendance. Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards healthy and safe living. They participate very enthusiastically in sports and make very healthy eating choices at lunchtimes. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. The school council has made many impressive suggestions leading to school improvement including reorganising aspects of break-times. In view of pupils' achievements and personal development, their preparedness for the future is outstanding.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The impact is seen in the extremely strong outcomes and excellence in all aspects of the school's provision. The headteacher has led the school for around 30 years now and retires shortly. All parents and staff are appreciative of the exceptional learning ethos she leaves as a legacy. Inclusion lies at the heart of the school's work and is the hallmark of its success. Leaders at all levels have successfully developed a sense of common purpose across the school. They work tirelessly checking the effectiveness of provision and making improvements. The governing body works very effectively with the school and acts as a 'critical friend'. The school knows itself extremely well. It was judged as outstanding at the last inspection. The school has maintained all its exceptional qualities and has also improved attendance, governance and raised standards to higher levels. These factors demonstrate an excellent capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas for development that the school is not already aware of and/or addressing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievements are equally impressive, regardless of their learning difficulties, gender or ethnicity. Pupils who attend the school part-time also achieve remarkably well. The pupils with the most complex learning difficulties achieve as well as their peers because of the outstanding support they receive in the classroom. Everyone's progress in reading is excellent because there are so many chances to read to adults. Staff are very skilful in evaluating pupils' skills in reading and in promoting a love of books. Achievement in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is outstanding. The school has just received the 2009 provisional national test results for its Year 6 pupils. These indicate that the percentage of its pupils reaching average standards for their age in English and mathematics is much higher than at the time of the last inspection. This is also the case regarding the percentage performing at above average standards. These factors clearly demonstrate that standards are rising.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development makes an excellent contribution to learning. They are very eager to learn and use a great deal of initiative in lessons. Pupils rightly take immense pride in their achievements. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have a very clear sense of right and wrong. They are very thoughtful in discussion and deal with potentially controversial matters in a very mature manner. For example, regarding the wearing of veils by women in Islam, pupils say that this should always be a matter of choice, so long as it does not compromise health and safety. Pupils have developed excellent attitudes towards diversity and are very strongly committed to racial and cultural harmony. Relationships between pupils are excellent. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem and they are confident that adults are caring and very supportive if they have any worries.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers capture the interest of pupils at the start of each lesson very effectively. Lessons provide many practical and interesting experiences for all pupils and this engages them very successfully. The pace of work is excellent and this helps pupils to develop a sense of urgency about learning and making the best use of time. The level of challenge in lessons for different groups of pupils is equally impressive. The end of lessons are very effective, enabling pupils to recap on what they have done and how well. A very good example of creative teaching was seen in a literacy lesson in the hall. The teacher made excellent use of space to support learning. This enabled pupils to work in pairs, each taking turns to develop speaking and listening skills. They blindfolded each other and gave instructions about exploring an imaginary Second World War battlefield. Assessment and marking of pupils' work are excellent. Information collected is used most effectively to set very challenging learning targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides a wide variety of enjoyable and imaginative learning chances for pupils. Provision for developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT is exceptional. Personal, social and health education is very effective and is woven into all aspects of the curriculum. These factors prepare pupils extremely well for the future. Pupils say that they especially enjoy learning through practical work because they can see the relevance of what they learn to their lives. Pupils also like the chance to learn basic French and to develop their skills in music. The curriculum is further enriched by an abundance of extra-curricular activities. These include many opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle and to learn about safety through sport. Physical activities include cheerleading, football, fencing and judo. Trips are plentiful and include art galleries, theatres and museums. Visits also enable pupils to learn about the many beliefs, traditions and customs of others in our multicultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Representative views from pupils include, 'I'm thrilled to be at this school, I couldn't ever have achieved as much if I hadn't come here. Teachers are kind and understanding, and I like the smaller classes'. Academic guidance is excellent. Consequently, pupils know what to do to improve. Day-to-day pastoral support and guidance are outstanding. Celebration assemblies are frequently held and are very effective in raising pupils' aspirations. Lots of treats and certificates help to motivate pupils to achieve their best and to make any improvements needed to their attendance or behaviour. Excellent links with many external agencies ensure pupils' care and well-being are outstanding. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and regularly reviewed, and health and safety is carefully managed. Current government safeguarding requirements are met. In this safe and very supportive environment, pupils reach very challenging targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership of the school is very successfully focused on raising standards and achievement. The quality of education has improved considerably since the last inspection. Leaders have stuck to the task of raising standards, despite the loss of several experienced staff, including senior leaders. The headteacher has made shrewd staffing changes and the excellent arrangements for professional development have ensured that the new leaders have assumed their responsibilities extremely rapidly. This has ensured that achievement is still exceptional. Self-evaluation is very effective. Simple modesty explains why the school judged leadership and management as only being good. The single issue at the last inspection regarding the 'critical friend' role of the governing body has been addressed very well. Resources are extremely well used to improve outcomes. For example, although space is at a premium in the school, every area is used very effectively and classrooms have small areas where pupils can be taught individually. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis with administrative, catering and cleaning staff all playing their part. The school has an excellent reputation with parents, local residents and the wider community. This is a measure of its outstanding actions to promote

community cohesion. Every response to the parental questionnaire was extremely positive in its appreciation of the school's work.

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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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected 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 Orrets Meadow School.

Your school is outstanding. This is because the teachers and other adults provide you with lots of exciting things to do. You have outstanding teachers and this is why you all learn such a lot. The care, guidance and support you receive are excellent. You know what you need to do to be healthy and safe. Your behaviour is outstanding and you are all very polite and helpful. I was very impressed with the work of the school council and the way they help everyone with their great ideas. The headteacher, staff and governors all work very hard indeed to make sure you all keep learning so quickly. The school knows how to keep on improving and so I am not making any additional recommendations.

You are all doing amazingly well and I know that your parents are very proud of your achievements. Keep up all your hard work.