

Presfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104977
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	336397
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Emerson

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr David Rimmer
Headteacher	Mrs G Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2006
School address	Preston New Road Churchtown Southport PR9 8PA
Telephone number	01704 227831
Fax number	01704 232306
Email address	head.presfield@schools.sefton.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed nine lessons, including two jointly observed with the leadership team; made short visits to several other lessons; and held meetings with staff, students, governors and representatives of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and checked students' books and the system for tracking students' progress. Inspectors examined the files of three vulnerable students to see how well the school manages their provision and checks their progress. A wide range of documentation was also examined, including reports by the School Improvement Partner and policy documents for safeguarding and other statutory requirements. In addition, the inspectors looked at the 28 parental questionnaires which were returned.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- whether students are set specific and achievable targets, and whether tracking systems show how well students are doing to reach the targets
- whether teachers are skilled in teaching students with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and how well this group of students are learning
- the quality of the curriculum for students with ASD
- how well teachers are using information gained from assessment to match work to the needs of individual students.

Information about the school

Presfield has undergone considerable changes since the previous inspection. The number of students on role has grown and the sixth form has doubled in size. Students with ASD now make up just under half of the school population. As a consequence, the school's designation is being changed from a school which caters for students with moderate learning difficulties to a school for students with ASD. The majority of students are boys and there are only a small number of girls. All the students have a statement of special educational needs. A few students are from ethnic minority groups or are in the care of the local authority. Students come from a broad range of social backgrounds.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good education for students. The main strength is in the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support. Students' welfare is promoted extremely well through excellent links with parents and carers and a variety of specialist staff, such as the speech and language therapist. Students' individual needs are very well understood, and detailed care plans are in place for particularly vulnerable students, such as those with additional medical needs. As a consequence, students have very good relationships with staff and feel extremely safe and secure. They grow in confidence and make strong progress in developing their social and communication skills. Following an effective training programme, staff have developed good skills in working with students with ASD. This has led to improvements in teaching and target setting, with some outstanding teaching. All groups of students are making good progress in achieving their targets for learning and behaviour. In the main school the curriculum is now well adjusted to meet the needs of students with ASD as well as those with moderate learning difficulties. However, the school rightly identifies that the curriculum in the sixth form needs further development to include some of the ASD strategies which are in place in the main school. The tracking of students' progress has improved a great deal since the previous inspection. This means that the school can now demonstrate clearly how well all students are doing. However, teachers do not always use information gained from assessment well enough to match the work set in lessons to the needs of individual students. As a result, on a small number of occasions, some students are not challenged as well as they might be.

The headteacher has been extremely effective in creating an ambitious and committed staff team where all staff, including senior leaders, are making a much stronger contribution to the school's improvement. In particular, she has ensured that the school is effectively fulfilling its new role and is successfully meeting the needs of all students. Systems to evaluate and monitor the work of the school have improved well since the previous inspection and are thorough and rigorous. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and has identified clearly what it needs to do to improve further. As a result, the school has demonstrated that it has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that work set in lessons is always matched exactly to the learning levels of individual students by making better use of information gained from assessment when planning lessons.

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- Develop the curriculum in the sixth form for students with ASD by September 2010 by planning and implementing ASD strategies similar to those which are in place for students in Years 7 to 11.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Bearing in mind students' special educational needs and/or disabilities, they achieve well. This is because teaching is good and students are given good individual support. As a result, they enjoy lessons, try hard and make good progress. The school's tracking systems demonstrate that students with moderate learning difficulties and those with ASD learn equally well. They successfully achieve the challenging targets which are set in English, mathematics and science. Students in Year 11 and those in the sixth form achieve a good range of qualifications and the number of GCSE passes has improved significantly.

Students behave sensibly around the school and are supportive of one another. They say that they feel extremely safe and that if there is any bullying it is very quickly dealt with by staff. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and students make good progress in learning how to stay fit and healthy. Although the role of the school council is still developing, students make a good contribution to the school and local community. Year 11 students take their responsibilities as prefects very seriously and sixth form students work hard to raise funds for charity. Involvement in enterprise schemes, such as the 'Growing Business', give students skills which will stand them in good stead when they leave the school. Although questionnaires returned by students indicated that some students do not enjoy school, this reflects students' difficulties in understanding the questions. During the inspection students clearly told the inspectors that they enjoy school a good deal. Their enjoyment is evident in their good attendance. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they develop a good understanding of the diverse cultures which contribute to British society.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lesson observations and analysis of students and their workbooks show that teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. Teachers have good skills in teaching students with moderate learning difficulties. As a result of effective training, teachers are now confident in using specific strategies, such as visual timetables and symbols, to ensure that students with ASD are fully included in lessons and learn well. An example of this was in a good mathematics lesson for students with ASD, where the teacher was effective in using a variety of visual resources to help students to develop their investigative skills. As a result of these well-planned and suitable methods, students were highly engaged, enjoyed the lesson and made good progress in understanding and explaining number patterns. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make lessons interesting. Effective support from teachers and support staff ensures that all students participate fully. Assessment has improved well and is more accurate than at the previous inspection. However, in a small number of lessons teachers do not use the information gained from assessment well enough to adapt work for individual students. The curriculum has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is much better adapted to meet the particular needs of students with ASD. Students study a good variety of subjects and have increasingly good opportunities to gain a variety of accreditation at different levels. Students particularly enjoy the good use which the school makes of community facilities, such as a local leisure centre, to promote physical education and healthy living.

Very strong partnerships with parents and carers, and a range of agencies, ensure that all students, including the most vulnerable, are carefully monitored and supported.

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Students are unanimous in saying that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Guidance is good and students are well prepared for the transition into the sixth form or their next placement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher has worked extremely effectively to create a school where staff are ambitious for improvement and are taking a fuller part in promoting school development. Key systems, such as those to monitor the quality of teaching, to track students' progress, and to evaluate how well the school is doing have improved well and are more rigorous. The issues raised in the previous inspection regarding the quality of provision for students with ASD have been fully addressed. These improvements have had a positive impact on teaching and learning, with all groups of students now making good progress. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Governors have a good understanding of how the school needs to develop further and provide a good level of support and challenge. The school's thorough and accurate self-evaluation demonstrates that it is setting and reaching challenging targets. Resources are used well to provide good value for money. The school is a very cohesive community where all students, whatever their backgrounds, get along well with each other. The school is taking initiatives such as developing links with a Polish school to reflect the growing Polish community in Sefton. A comprehensive policy with a detailed development plan ensures that the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion which is closely monitored. The school's procedures for safeguarding students are rigorous, robust and well established. They are in line with government requirements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students enjoy their time in the sixth form and make good progress in developing academic, practical and social skills which prepare them well for life in the community. This is because teaching is good and students are given just the right level of support so that they make good progress in developing their independence skills. Excellent links with services such as Connexions enable students to make well-informed choices about their future and move on successfully to college. They have good opportunities to learn about the world of work through work experience and through producing goods for sale as part of the 'Growing Business' initiative. Students make a good contribution to the local community, for example through fundraising, but could take on more responsibilities in the school. The curriculum offers a good variety of accreditation and higher-attaining students now have better opportunities to gain qualifications. However, it needs refining further to better meet the needs of the growing number of students joining the sixth form who have ASD. The improvements to the sixth form and the way it has successfully managed the large growth in numbers of students is testimony to good leadership and management and indicates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires were returned by 37% of parents . In addition, one parent asked to meet with the inspectors. Parents are generally very positive about the school with

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almost none raising concerns. A very few parents disagreed that their children enjoyed school, were making enough progress or were well prepared for the future. A very few parents noted that they were not kept well informed, enabled to support their children's learning, felt that behaviour was not well managed or that the school did not meet the particular needs of their children. However, all other questionnaires indicated that parents feel that their children are happy, safe and making good progress. This view is typified by a parent who wrote: 'I cannot express enough how impressed I am with the quality of teaching and learning at Presfield. My daughter receives such excellent support, encouragement and care from all the teaching staff and from the headteacher.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Presfield School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 75 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	76	4	19	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	76	4	19	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	62	7	33	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	71	5	24	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	71	4	19	0	0	1	5
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	67	6	29	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	57	7	33	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	67	6	29	0	0	1	5
The school is led and managed effectively	15	71	5	24	0	0	1	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	81	3	14	1	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Presfield School, Southport, PR9 8PA

I know that some of you find reading difficult, so your teachers will tell you about this letter. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We really enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. It was very useful to know what you think about your school. Your parents and carers think you go to a good school and we agree with them. There are many things that are particularly good about your school. These include:

- the outstanding care, support and guidance which you are given which includes excellent links with your parents and carers and with outside agencies
- the strong relationships with staff and very effective measures to tackle any bullying, which mean that you feel very safe
- good teaching and your good attitudes, behaviour and attendance, which enable you to make good progress in lessons.
- the very effective way in which your headteacher is improving the school.

We have asked the school to change two things to make it even better. These are:

- to ensure that work set is always at exactly the right level for every one of you
- to develop the curriculum in the sixth form so that it is better adapted for those students who have autistic spectrum disorder.

We hope that you will continue to help staff all you can.

Yours sincerely

Christine Emerson

Lead Inspector

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