

Hinderton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111510
Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	337696
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Sara Morrissey HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Pritchard
Headteacher	Mr Liam McCallion
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2007
School address	Capenhurst Lane Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 7AQ
Telephone number	0151 338 2200
Fax number	0151 356 8765
Email address	head@hinderton.cheshire.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Inspection number	337696

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Parts of 10 lessons were observed and five teachers seen; meetings were held with staff, the school council and the Chair of the Governing Body. Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' individual learning files and progress records, teaching files, curriculum planning and practice relating to the safeguarding of children. An annual review of a pupil's progress between school leaders and a parent was also observed and responses to 18 questionnaires from parents and carers, five questionnaires from pupils and 25 questionnaires from staff were scrutinised.

Her Majesty's Inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- how well different groups of pupils learn and make progress over time relative to their starting points
- how effectively pupils develop strategies to manage their own behaviour and take responsibility for their learning
- the impact of teaching and use of assessment to support learning and accelerate pupils' progress
- the characteristics of best practice that support the school's view about its overall effectiveness
- the effectiveness and capacity of leadership at all levels to sustain and drive improvement.

Information about the school

This very small primary special school caters for pupils from a wide area that extends beyond the local authority boundary. Most children come from West Cheshire and Chester. There are significantly more boys than girls at the school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Although most children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, a small number of pupils join the school in other year groups from mainstream provision.

Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs because of their significant social communication needs. Almost all pupils have autistic spectrum conditions (ASC). Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils who are profoundly affected by ASC and who have profound sensory needs has risen. The proportion of children who are non-verbal communicators has also risen, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is part of an Educational Improvement Partnership in Ellesmere Port comprising neighbouring primary, secondary and special schools. The school has been accredited by the National Autistic Society for three consecutive years and is viewed as a centre of excellence in meeting the needs of young children with ASC.

At the time of the inspection the headteacher was absent due to ill health. The school is currently being led by the deputy headteacher supported by the senior leadership team.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. The headteacher's vision to create a child-centred place of learning that brings out the best in all pupils is deeply rooted in all the school's work. The comment by one parent, 'The school is excellent and I can't imagine my son being anywhere better,' typifies the views of others and reflects the very positive impact of the partnerships established to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met.

Pupils make exceptional progress in their learning from the time they start at the school. Teachers are highly skilful in identifying the needs of individual pupils because of their extensive professional knowledge about teaching children with ASC. The quality of care and support provided to help pupils access and engage in their learning is outstanding. Staff teams work very effectively to break down barriers to learning and accelerate pupils' progress towards individual learning targets. A very strong focus on developing pupils' social communication skills is successful in reducing pupils' anxieties and helping them to take an active part in their learning. The different patterns of behaviour exhibited by individual pupils are well understood and innovative management strategies ensure that the learning environment is calm and planned carefully to respond to pupils' personal preferences. This contributes to excellent behaviour in lessons and around school. Pupils feel safe because of the well-structured approach to learning. As they progress through the school, pupils become less reliant on adults; they are encouraged to make choices about their learning and enjoy working towards the rewards they receive for good effort and achievement. Individual case studies of pupils' progress illustrate well the giant strides that they make in their personal and academic development over time. This is because an exciting and engaging curriculum provides memorable experiences and is delivered through highly effective teaching that challenges pupils to participate in activities that extend their learning and skill development.

The dynamic and self-challenging school community demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve. Systems and structures to ensure the smooth running of the school are well established and followed to a consistently high standard. Staff teams demonstrate high levels of commitment to the school's aims. During the absence of the headteacher, senior leaders have picked up the reins of responsibility with determination to ensure that improvement plans are implemented successfully. Leaders at all levels are reflective in their practice and draw upon current research to improve the standard of education for all pupils further. They recognise that the use of modern technologies could be developed further to enhance the effectiveness of teaching that is already outstanding. The role of the governing body has increased in supporting the school and holding it to account. Parents and carers are very confident in the school's ability to support their

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

children, although a very small number would like to have better information about their children's progress. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers, external agencies and the wider community promote opportunities for all pupils very well and prepare them effectively for the next steps in their education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take full advantage of modern technologies to:
 - enhance teaching practice further
 - improve the interpretation of progress information for parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils make rapid gains in their learning and their achievement is outstanding over time. This is because of excellent provision that is based firmly on a deep understanding of pupils' individual special educational needs and/or disabilities. Barriers to learning are systematically broken down and a 'total communication approach', including the use of pictures, symbols, and signing and gesture helps to develop pupils' skills and confidence as learners as they progress through the school. Given the nature of their special educational needs, it is not appropriate to make comparisons with published national data relating to pupils' attainment. However, pupils of all abilities meet their challenging individual learning targets in all subject areas and are outstanding when compared with the achievements of children who have similar starting points nationally. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding; they learn to communicate their anxieties to adults non-verbally and verbally and make choices about how to manage their own behaviour. Pupils' learning records and parents' and carers' responses to the questionnaires reflect how well the significant improvements in behaviour have contributed to all aspects of their personal and academic development. As they progress through the school, pupils' reliance on support from adults diminishes and their competence as independent learners increases, which is a testimony to the success of this school. Lesson observations demonstrated pupils' enjoyment of and engagement in learning and their increasing interest in different subjects as they grow in confidence. Attendance is above average overall and for some individuals it is high.

The school community is underpinned by warm and respectful relationships between adults and pupils. Members of the school council report that pupils feel very safe in school and know that they are cared for well. Pupils learn to share, take turns and show consideration for each other. At break times, they play together collaboratively and eating lunch is a sociable occasion. Pupils value highly the wide range of activities that promote healthy lifestyles and some talked with enthusiasm about the forthcoming 'basketball challenge' and growing healthy food produce in new raised beds allocated to each class. They know about the importance of recycling and the importance of looking after the environment. Pupils take pride in their school and enjoy the celebration assemblies that reward their successes. They take on responsibilities in school seriously and contribute to the wider community through fund-raising events and collections for

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

charities, for example 'Engage in Africa'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Highly effective teaching is informed by detailed subject knowledge and accurate assessments of different learning needs. Individual pupils' profiles and ongoing records of assessment are used precisely to inform planning that offers challenge and support for pupils of all abilities. Staff teams work collaboratively to engage and motivate pupils through imaginative activities that are tailored to meet interests and accelerate progress towards learning goals. Lessons are structured carefully so that pupils know what to expect. Personalised work stations help pupils to establish their own learning routines. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to learn to work together in small groups and independently. The curriculum is suitably broad, covers all subject areas and promotes pupils' academic and personal development very well. Imaginative topics are

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.

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

age-appropriate and tailored to meet the interests and abilities of all pupils. A strong emphasis on music therapy and physical education promotes both physical and sensory development well. Basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology are integrated across the curriculum and links are made effectively between different subjects to increase their relevance. The curriculum is enriched by after-school activities such as a cubs group, girls' football and visits to out-of-school facilities. Pupils reported that they particularly enjoy horse riding, swimming and visits to the local library.

The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils reflects a shared understanding among staff that the needs of each child are unique. Excellent practice identified at the last inspection has improved further because staff question and evaluate their own practice, for example at annual reviews with parents and carers, to ensure that the care and support provided for pupils is of the highest quality. Intimate care plans for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable reflect the strong emphasis placed on health and safety issues as well as respect for personal dignity. Links with external agencies are excellent and staff vigorously seek out new strategies to support pupils when necessary. For example, pupils have benefited from working with an occupational therapist to promote their physical and sensory development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are united in the drive to improve the prospects for all pupils at Hinderton School. There is a strong commitment to securing equal opportunities for all pupils and to tackle any discrimination should it arise. An ongoing professional dialogue between staff teams enables pupils' progress to be monitored and plans amended to improve outcomes. Regular observations of teaching inform a tailored programme of continuing professional development that enables teachers to refine their skills further. The school's expertise and knowledge is recognised and shared with other providers and further spread through outreach work.

The governing body fulfils its role effectively in holding the school to account. Governors are actively engaged in supporting the school through family events such as the school barbecue and additional links with neighbouring schools. They also make a full contribution to ensure that every possible step is taken to keep pupils safe. Procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are rigorous and include innovative practice that takes

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

advantage of modern technologies. Partnerships in promoting learning and well-being are extensive and focus sharply on pupils' needs. For example, arrangements with local transport firms ensure that adults involved in the transport of pupils are familiar to them. The close links established with parents and carers promote pupils' learning and well-being well both at school and at home. The school is outward looking and links with the local and wider community are a reflection of the outstanding steps taken to promote community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Highly effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has transformed provision in response to the changing needs of children entering the school. From the first moment at school, children begin to develop routines that enable them to work together as a class, in small groups and independently. Exemplary teaching enables children to make rapid gains in all areas of learning and particularly in the development of their language and communication skills. Adults achieve a very good balance between adult-initiated activities and giving children the chance to make choices for themselves. Wall displays are interactive; for example an ocean collage encourages children to touch and move features around. Children explore their senses and learn about the world around them in the well-resourced outdoor learning area. Great care and attention are given to children's welfare and to ensuring their safety. The links forged at an early stage with parents and carers play a significant role in children's development and effective partnerships with external agencies, including speech and language therapists, ensure that children gain firm foundations on which to build their learning in the future.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the support their children receive to promote their learning and well-being. Their comments were full of praise about the way in which the school has helped to improve their children's experience not only at school but also at home. A very small number of parents and carers expressed the wish to have better information about their children's progress. One parent was concerned that leaders focused more on whole-school issues rather than the needs of the individual child. However, Her Majesty's Inspector found no evidence to support this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hinderton 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 inspector received 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 30 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	67	6	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	89	2	11	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	72	4	22	1	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	61	6	33	1	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	72	4	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	61	7	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	78	4	22	0	0	0	0
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)	12	67	6	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	83	1	6	1	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	72	5	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	67	6	33	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	72	5	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	83	2	11	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hinderton School, Ellesmere Port CH65 7AQ

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I came to find out what you thought about your school. I also wanted to know about the ways your teachers and other adults help you to enjoy school and do your best in your work.

The members of your school council were very helpful. I asked them to answer questions on your behalf and I agree with all the answers they gave me. They told me that you:

- feel safe and know that there are always adults to help you
- behave well and get on with each other
- enjoy coming to school and that you learn a lot in lessons
- learn how to improve your work because your teachers explain things for you
- enjoy all the extra activities like horse riding, swimming and PE that make learning fun
- make decisions that help improve the school further, for example the play area.

Members of the school council were also very keen to tell me that they thought the adults in the school do a good job and I agree with them. That is why I have judged Hinderton School to be outstanding.

Well done everyone!

I have given the adults one more challenge to help the school improve even more. I have asked them to find ways of using new technology both to help you learn even more and to make it even easier for your parents and carers to know how well you are doing.

With all good wishes for the future

Sara Morrissey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.