

Mayfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112464
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337936
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Terence McKenzie

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	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jackie Davies
Headteacher	Mrs L Brownrigg
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited eight lessons and an assembly. Inspectors held discussions with a governor, staff, and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at assessment and tracking information, teachers' planning, safeguarding documents, key policies and 40 parent/carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of teaching and assessment on pupils' and students' achievement
- how well the curriculum promotes future economic well-being and develops pupils' and students' basic skills
- the impact of school leadership and management in making changes and improvements
- how well pupils and students are cared for, safeguarded and supported and whether there are equal opportunities for all.

Information about the school

Mayfield School currently educates pupils and students between the ages of five and 19 with severe and complex learning difficulties. Pupils and students join the school at different times of their school lives and Mayfield has a wide catchment with some learners travelling up to one hour each day. Seventy one pupils and students have a statement of special educational need for a specific learning difficulty, whilst 16 have a statement for profound and multiple learning difficulties. Almost all require help with communication and many are assisted with mobility. During this academic year two pupils have a dual placement with another school. Pupils and students come from varied social backgrounds, all are White British and 34 receive free school meals.

The headteacher and her deputy have both been appointed since the last inspection. Mayfield has recently achieved specialist status as a special educational needs school and gained accreditations in Activemark (2008), Eco Schools Bronze Award, Investors in People (2008), the Sports Mark (2008) and the Inclusion Charter Mark 'Enhancing Gold' status (2009).

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

1

Main findings

Mayfield is a good and inclusive school with many outstanding features. It is extremely well led and managed and most staff demonstrate high morale. The school meets the educational needs of pupils and students well and provides outstanding care and support. Pupils come to school willingly and their very good behaviour demonstrates appreciation of the facility. Most parents and carers praise the school and for many it has changed their lives for the better. One commented 'Mayfield has given my son hope for the future'. However, not all parents fully appreciate the work that the school undertakes and Mayfield is aware that it needs to improve communications between school and home.

The outstanding work of the governing body helps maintain the high quality of leadership and management in the school. The headteacher has taken the lead in making significant improvements to the provision since the last inspection and is committed to continuing this. For example, it is planned that the robust assessment systems developed at Mayfield will be used to even better effect to help teachers set more precise lesson targets. The school is clear about priorities and is keen to further develop the already effective curriculum for the older students. Processes and procedures for self-evaluation are outstanding and constantly challenged by the governors so that all have a clear vision of how to ensure that learners receive the best care and education possible. These considerable strengths demonstrate the school's outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

Pupils and students adopt healthy lifestyles and make excellent contributions to communities. They are safe in school and safeguarding procedures are managed well. Good relationships exist with key partners such as therapy and health service staff, who are integrally involved in pupils' and students' development.

Despite the physical and other needs of the pupils and students, Mayfield focuses on learning so that all can achieve. The development of basic skills in communication and number now occurs across the curriculum as an improvement since the previous inspection. Older students have very good work-related opportunities that help them develop skills for moving on to the next stages of their lives. Staff are working hard under the leadership of the headteacher to ensure that all areas of learning and progress will become even better in due course.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the use of assessment procedures so that more appropriate individual targets can be set for pupils and students during lessons.

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- Improve communications between the school and home so that parents and carers have even better understanding of the work done with their children.
- Continue to explore and implement new curriculum pathways for students aged 14 to 19.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Because of their learning difficulties the attainment of pupils and students is well below that expected for all schools but their progress compared to pupils and students in other similar schools is at least good. Their progress is shown through the regular recording of outcomes by teachers and by the good work done in lessons. Progress is consistent throughout the school so that no groups are disadvantaged. Pupils and students apply themselves to their best ability and they work hard. They often demonstrate enjoyment in lessons and they want to do well to please the adults with whom they work.

A few parents and carers together with a small number of staff expressed their concerns that the unpredictable behaviour of a small minority can lead to unsafe situations. However, this was unsubstantiated during the inspection despite close scrutiny of incident records, staff training records and the examination of procedures for behaviour management. Mayfield works hard to ensure that as safe environment as possible is maintained for pupils, students and staff. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because the school ensures that all have an environment adjusted as far as possible to their needs and tolerances. This is achieved through the considered use of technology and décor. Pupils and students begin to understand about right and wrong and what is acceptable. The calm atmosphere of the school fosters good relationships between all. Those with communication difficulties, therefore, have opportunities to develop social skills and to learn how to interact with others.

Since gaining the Healthy School's Award the school has not relaxed its efforts in helping pupils and students to understand and enjoy healthy lifestyles. School lunch menus deliver healthy options and individual dietary needs are met. Pupils and students all enjoy at least two hours of physical activity each week enhanced with swimming and other activities. The extended school promotes sports such as rugby and soccer and it has gained awards for these. Pupils and students have outstanding interactions with a wide range of communities. There is a strong sense of togetherness as was demonstrated in an assembly where pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties performed dance and drama to their peers. The vibrant school council makes its views known and has successfully established a tuck shop for healthy snacks. More widely, the school engages in charity work and it combines with other special schools to enable young people to undertake sports events. The national Rock Challenge gives older students opportunities to perform alongside others from different areas. The Comenius Project helps teachers visit other special schools in Europe where they establish links for students to explore. In exchange, European teachers come to Mayfield to share ideas and experiences.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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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	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is good overall. In the best lessons, teachers are very aware of pupils' and students' abilities through accurate assessments. Here they plan very small steps so that progress can be quickly and efficiently evidenced. Classroom assistants understand what is expected of the pupils and students and support them well. A few teachers use exemplary skills and experience. However, close attention to assessment is not uniform throughout the school, so that learning targets are not always set accurately. On some occasions, the school uses assessments very effectively. For example, scrutiny of assessment data by the senior managers revealed that a group of hearing impaired pupils was falling behind other groups. The school redeployed resources and now that particular group achieves well and in line with the remainder of the school population.

The school places much emphasis on providing appropriate learning environments for pupils and students. This helps reduce negative behaviour and to engage learners appropriately in lessons. Some teachers make effective use of communication aids such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), signing and electronic voice simulation. Much improvement has occurred since the last inspection in the use of technology and every classroom now has an interactive whiteboard. Staff and students are confident in the use of this technology. This enables pupils to participate in activities

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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from which they would otherwise be excluded. Mayfield also makes use of an initiative that encourages pupils and students to improve mobility. This allows them to undertake aspects of education that they would otherwise miss. The use of resources to support learning in every classroom is outstanding. All groups of pupils and students are enabled and included in learning activities.

The curriculum is outstanding because it provides a framework for teaching and learning that meets the individual needs of pupils and students. Every subject encourages the development of communication and numeracy. Pupils and students use information and communication technology (ICT) in all areas of learning and the curriculum provides opportunities for groups to share tasks together but to also undertake individual work. Mayfield uses a range of curriculum sources, including the National Curriculum and the Equals Scheme for pupils and students of all ages. Different areas of the curriculum operate to help pupils and students learn and understand as much as they are able about cultures and religions from around the world. Between the ages of 14 and 19 many students gain a variety of accreditations. Mayfield is working towards further development of the curriculum that would allow students an even wider choice through studying Entry Level Certificates and perhaps enabling a few to gain GCSEs.

The high staffing levels and skills of the adults ensure that all needs are attended to so that learners can maintain their classroom presence. Whilst Mayfield provides outstanding care and support throughout the school day pupils and students rely on the strong and positive links with outside agencies to support their medical and other needs. Without these links they would often be unable to attend school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
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?

Mayfield is a rapidly improving school because of the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and senior team. Senior managers provide very clear direction and sense of purpose to the school and they are held fully to account by the challenging and well organised governing body. They ensure that all staff understand the priorities for development and the part that each can play in helping the school to improve through, for example, learning how to set challenging targets for pupils and students. All at Mayfield have opportunities to succeed and none are in any way discriminated against. This is because senior managers have implemented the innovative use of technology to reduce barriers to learning and carefully considered every learner's needs through

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attention to the environment. The outstanding deployment of resources confirms that the school provides very good value for money.

Much has been done to try to ensure that good links with learners' homes are maintained. For example, specialist software has been introduced that is designed to help parents and carers communicate with school staff through the internet. However, school managers know that they are not yet able to always communicate effectively with all parents and carers and further innovative ways to reach out to them have yet to be explored. Mayfield has adopted good quality practice in its safeguarding work and all required documents including policies, fire practice evacuation records, training records and risk assessments were in place at the time of the inspection. Community cohesion strategies are outstanding when considered in the context of the work undertaken to engage the young people with the wider community. It is also very well embedded into the curriculum through citizenship and personal social and health education.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

The Post-16 department of the school coexists with Key Stage 4 as a coherent 14-19 provision in its own area of the school. The accommodation with its own entrance for these older students reflects the ages and maturity of the young people and provides for work in classrooms as well as recreational areas and space to eat together. Other recent innovations have included the increasing availability of laptop computers that have become available through the specialist school status. Learning and progress is good and is reflected in the range and number of accredited qualifications obtained through

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ASDAN, DoE and the Unit Award Scheme. The Post-16 classes make excellent use of facilities and partners outside of the school to enable students to gain access to work related opportunities such as supported work experience and college courses.

The quality of teaching of the sixth form is good and the team of dedicated staff and managers recognise that there is yet more to do in matching courses to students' needs. The leadership and management of the sixth form reflect that of the whole school and are outstanding.

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	1

Views of parents and carers

40 parental questionnaires were received and responses were overwhelmingly positive. Many parents and carers took the trouble to write additional comments into the questionnaires to emphasise their support for the school. The comments included gratitude to the staff for the hard work that they perform with their children and the changes made to the lives of children and families as a result of attending Mayfield School. The majority of returns indicated that pupils and students enjoy coming to school and parents and carers believe that they make good progress.

A few parents and carers expressed concerns over the safety of pupils and staff in the school in relation to the management of behaviour. Whilst the concerns were fully investigated throughout the inspection no evidence was discovered to confirm them. Most parents and carers feel that Mayfield is a safe place for their children to attend.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mayfield 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	78	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	63	14	35	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	55	15	38	2	5	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	53	18	45	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	65	13	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	53	14	35	4	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	63	13	33	2	5	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)	22	55	15	38	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	58	16	40	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	58	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	58	13	33	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	63	11	28	3	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	68	12	30	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



21 October 2009

Dear Pupils and Students

Inspection of Mayfield School, Whitehaven, CA28 8TU

Thank you for making me and the other inspectors so welcome when we visited Mayfield recently. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work in your classrooms and around the school.

I very much enjoyed the assembly. The dancing you performed was very exciting! It was good to see that you wanted to put on a show for everyone to enjoy.

These are some of the things that we found out during the inspection from watching your lessons, talking with your teachers and reading comments from your parents and carers.

- Most of you really enjoy going to school and your attendance is outstanding.
- You make good progress in your learning at Mayfield.
- You get on very well together and your behaviour is very good.
- The school provides exciting opportunities for you.
- Your teachers work hard to plan interesting things for lessons.
- All of the adults look after you very well indeed.
- The headteacher, managers and governors do a very good job.
- The school is improving and can become even better than it is.

I have asked your teachers to try even harder to set targets for you during lessons. This will help everyone see how well you are doing and what you are capable of. They will also try to find more courses for you older students to study so that you can gain even more qualifications in time. I have asked the headteacher to find new and different ways of communicating between school and home. This will help all of your parents and carers to know and understand better what is happening at school.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Terence McKenzie

Lead inspector

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