

Mayfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119889
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339545
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Caroline Broomhead 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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Price
Headteacher	Ms Gela Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, other professionals and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including school policies and assessment data, and analysed the responses of the 37 questionnaires from parents and carers, 41 staff questionnaires and 32 pupils' questionnaires. They spent seven hours looking at learning and observed almost all teachers.

- pupils' progress and achievements
- the effectiveness of provision in meeting pupils' complex individual needs
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in securing and sustaining good quality outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Mayfield School makes provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties, including autism, and additional physical, sensory and emotional and behavioural difficulties. With the exception of one, all pupils have a statement of special educational need. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and none has English as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils looked after by the local authority is very small. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of seven children. The school has specialist status for communication and interaction. It has achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

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

Mayfield is a good school which cares extremely well for its pupils and makes good educational provision to meet their complex needs. The school enjoys the overwhelming support of parents who speak highly of the provision, with more than one describing it as 'a safe haven'. The pupils are polite and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors and are a credit to the school and their families.

The curriculum is carefully planned to suit the wide age and ability ranges, with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication and language skills and the skills they will need as they mature and prepare to move into adult life in the wider community. Team teaching is the norm in this school, with teachers and teaching assistants having a good understanding of pupils' individual needs and personalities and working together very effectively to make learning interesting and fun. The staff are skilled in planning lessons which include multi-sensory approaches that appeal to the pupils' different learning styles. Teachers' planning usually takes account of pupils' personal learning targets but occasionally the tasks set are too easy or too difficult and pupils become over-reliant on adult support. The pupils lead active lives in school and clearly enjoy the wide range of practical activities planned for them. As a result of the good teaching, the pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their abilities. The older pupils receive external awards for their achievements, although the school knows that some are capable of achieving higher level awards than are offered by the school at the moment.

Senior leaders and managers have high expectations for the education, care and well-being of pupils. They regularly review provision to ensure that it is relevant to pupils' needs and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, but reports to governors and others do not always make clear the progress the school is making against its improvement plans. The rigour of assessment has improved since the last inspection, enabling the school to analyse pupils' rates of progress with some accuracy. However, the school does not yet make full use of this information to inform whole school improvement planning and when setting targets for improvement. The school's specialist expertise in communication and interaction is used very effectively within the school to improve pupils' learning and personal development. Other schools in the authority also draw on this expertise when seeking advice and training for their staff and when placing pupils at the school for part-time specialist teaching. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Refine arrangements for planning and reporting on school improvement and using pupils' performance data when setting and reviewing whole-school improvement targets.
- Ensure that there is consistency in planning lessons so that tasks are matched to pupils' needs and reduce reliance on adult support.
- Extend the range of accreditation available to pupils aged 14 to 19 years, particularly for those who have the potential to reach higher levels of attainment.

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

All pupils have severe, or profound and multiple, learning difficulties. Consequently, their attainment is well below the average for pupils of the same age. They make good progress in their learning from their starting points, with some achieving extremely well in aspects of communication and numeracy. Most pupils have speech and language difficulties, but can confidently use photographs and symbols to communicate their feelings, choices and needs and some are becoming more skilled in using signing. Some learn to read basic text and to begin to form letter shapes. The more able can copy single words and simple sentences. In numeracy, the pupils learn basic counting skills and begin to learn about managing their own time and using money. From an early age, pupils learn basic self-help skills such as dressing themselves and the older ones enjoy making a drink and a snack. Pupils of all abilities love control technology; their faces light up when, for example, they start and stop the tape player. They use information and communication technology (ICT) with confidence and enjoyment; knowing how to use the mouse to manoeuvre around the screen and to press the interactive whiteboard to start and stop certain programmes.

The pupils enjoy an active lifestyle at school, willingly participate in swimming, dance and sports activities and are clearly proud of their achievements, for example when they learn to dive in at the swimming pool. They begin to understand about healthy foods and how to look after themselves, and some choose healthy options at lunchtime. In this calm environment, where relationships are extremely positive and respectful and behaviour is outstanding, the pupils feel very safe. This is seen in their willingness to take on new challenges and their understanding of the need for protective clothing in some situations. Parents confirm that their children feel safe at school.

Throughout the school day, pupils are encouraged to make choices which affect them. Some are on the school council and make suggestions for changes. Older pupils take on responsibilities within the school and help the younger pupils. During the school year the pupils are involved in activities to raise money for others in need. These are sometimes linked to enterprise activities, such as making and selling bookmarks.

This is a happy school where most pupils attend regularly and any absence is due to medical reasons. The older pupils successfully complete units of study in a broad range of subjects and achieve external accreditation. With support, they participate in work experience and community placements and a few attend local colleges or learn to travel independently, all of which contribute significantly to their future economic well-being.

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Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with particular strengths in social development. The pupils have opportunities to learn about other faiths and their own spirituality through religious education, assemblies and celebrations of festivals. However, the school recognises that their understanding of their own culture and the diversity of other cultures could be developed further.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and staff are skilled in enabling the pupils to fully access the curriculum. Wherever possible, the skills of language, literacy and numeracy are taught in meaningful contexts, for example, pupils were counting and measuring ingredients in a food technology lesson. ICT is used very effectively across the curriculum to support teaching and learning. Some inconsistency in lesson planning leads to a lack of clarity about the expected learning outcomes and tasks are not always

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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matched to pupils' abilities.

Assessment is good. There is generally careful tracking of pupils' small steps of learning against their individual targets and appropriate use of this information to plan the next steps in learning and to track pupils' progress. Good quality termly and annual reports keep parents updated on how well their children are progressing.

The curriculum is tailored to meet pupils' needs, abilities and ages. From Nursery through to sixth form, the curriculum gives pupils the many opportunities they need to develop their communication, literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills. It also effectively develops their creativity, physical stamina, emotional well-being, vocational awareness, independence and readiness for the next stages in their lives. Specialist facilities for teaching design technology and science, particularly to the older pupils, are somewhat limited. The curriculum is further enhanced through the use of community facilities and good partnerships with other schools, colleges and training providers.

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school has a welcoming ethos and support for parents and carers is extremely good. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. Throughout the school day, there are high levels of supervision which contribute significantly to pupils' safety and well-being. Teaching staff and other professionals, for example, a physiotherapist and the school nurse, work very effectively with parents to tailor programmes and support to individual needs. As pupils move up through school, staff teams ensure that assessment information is shared so that pupils can continue to progress in all aspects of their development. A transition coordinator works very effectively with parents and external agencies, to support leavers into adult life as smoothly as possible.

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?

Recent changes to the senior leadership team and governing body have been managed well with new post holders taking up their roles quickly and with energy and enthusiasm. The curriculum has been kept under review and revised to bring it into line with national changes, at the same time adapting it to meet the needs of the pupils. Subject leaders take responsibility for curriculum planning and resources and are aware of the need to make better use of pupils' performance data to evaluate the quality of provision. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development in teaching and assessment and recognise the areas of good practice

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which can be shared to bring about greater consistency. The school's involvement in a local authority project has led to greater reliability of teacher assessment and greater confidence in the school's judgement about pupils' achievements and progress compared with those with similar needs in other schools. The governors provide good support for the school. They have responsibilities for different aspects of the school's work and through regular visits and involvement know the staff and pupils well and have a good working knowledge of school life. The school takes a stringent approach to safeguarding which ensures that all checks, risk assessments and staff training meet requirements and effectively serve to protect pupils' health, safety and well-being.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well. It goes to great lengths to include all pupils in all aspects of school life and successfully achieves this aim. The school has a very small minority of pupils who are not White British and recognises that it may need to make greater efforts to provide opportunities for pupils to interact with others from different backgrounds. The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is also good. Pupils have a good understanding of their school and local communities and contribute responsibly to both. Opportunities for learning about national and international communities are less well-developed. The school has developed good partnerships with some surrounding schools, particularly in its role as a specialist school, with a resulting positive impact on pupils' learning and staff development. The school goes to great lengths to work in partnership with parents, who value this and hold the school in very high regard. The school provides good value for money.

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
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Under the highly skilled leadership of its coordinator, the quality of education and care in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children's welfare and development is maximised by a thorough knowledge and understanding of each child as an individual and through highly effective partnerships between staff, parents and other professionals. The learning environment is extremely well organised with an excellent range of resources which are easily accessed by children both indoors and out. Teaching is excellent and teaching assistants provide excellent support, ensuring an effective balance between directed activity and purposeful play. Children are challenged to try new experiences and to work independently where possible. They make excellent progress against their individual targets and clearly defined goals, which are reviewed regularly at team meetings. The children achieve extremely well in relation to their abilities and are given an excellent start in the school.

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

Sixth form

Provision in the Mayfield College for 16 to 19 year olds is good. The curriculum is relevant to the pupils' needs and growing maturity. Opportunities for work related learning and vocational educational continue to be a strength, as is the emphasis placed on enabling pupils to become more independent and confident when out in the community. Pupils have individual programmes and personal learning targets which focus on developing their communication and language skills and personal and social skills in a range of settings with varying degrees of adult support. The accreditation offered to those in the sixth form has been revised since the last inspection. The pupils complete modules of study and achieve awards as part of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network Towards Independence programme. The school has recognised that some pupils are capable of achieving higher level awards and is considering the introduction of the Foundation Learning Tier when these awards become available in the future.

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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

Thirty seven parents returned questionnaires and all were positive about the school, with a significant number being extremely complimentary about the high quality of care and education their children receive and the excellent support offered to families. One parental comment summed up the school very well in saying 'Mayfield is much more than a school, it is a family'.

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 inspection team received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 61 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	78	8	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	86	5	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	86	5	14	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	78	7	19	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	89	4	11	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	86	5	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	78	8	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)	31	84	4	11	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	89	4	11	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	84	6	16	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	81	6	16	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	89	4	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	95	2	5	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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspectors into your school this week. We know that you had only just returned from your Christmas break and all the snow and ice was making it difficult for some of you to get into school, but you all settled very quickly and took time to tell us about your school. I want to tell you what we found out during our inspection.

- We were extremely impressed with your behaviour around school and in lessons. You were all so polite and courteous with each other, with staff and with visitors. As a result, there is a lovely welcoming and calm atmosphere in your school.
- The care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding. The staff look after you very well and make sure that you get the help you need from the minute you arrive to when you go home. They are very skilled in helping you to look after yourselves and to become as independent as possible both in the school and out in the community.
- In lessons, you were keen to learn and do what was asked of you. We could see that you enjoy school and have fun. Your teachers and teaching assistants know each of you well and they usually plan their lessons so that the work is not too difficult or too easy for you. They keep good records of how well you are progressing at school.
- The headteacher, along with her managers and the governors do a good job of making sure that the school is a safe place to be and that your education is well-suited to your needs and interests. However, we think that they could offer more qualifications for those pupils who are able to reach higher levels in their lessons. Also we think that the school could make better use of the information they have about your progress when they are setting targets for improving the school.

Once again, thank you so much for chatting to us and showing us your good work.

Yours sincerely

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