

# Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	127802
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	341004
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marian Thomas

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	62
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Blowey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr B Frew
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Crossacres Road Peel Hall Wythenshawe M22 5DR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by nine teachers and one higher-level teaching assistant. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, teaching staff and the school's nurse. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning for lessons, school leaders' development plans and samples of pupils' work. They also took into account the views of 15 parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the inspection team.

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

- pupils' work in mathematics, English and physical education
- how well the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils
- the progress of different groups of pupils
- how well governors support the school.

## Information about the school

The school makes provision for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. A number of the 17 children on roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage are on assessment placements. The school provides for pupils with autism, significant learning difficulties, communication difficulties and severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school provides behavioural outreach support to 53 mainstream schools. There are significantly more boys than girls on roll. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is above the national average as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Eight children are in the care of the local authority. The school has been awarded the gold standard Healthy Schools award and Activemark for physical education.

**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

Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School is a good school, which has many strengths. The good care, guidance and support which it provides for all pupils and the success with which their complex special needs are met enable them to make good progress both personally and academically. Parents and carers appreciate the work of staff in supporting their children. One commented, 'Ashgate staff are just brilliant, they have made an amazing difference to my child.' This demonstrates the excellent relationships the school has built with parents and carers.

The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure the quality of provision necessary for them to do so. Self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and rigorous, and findings are acted upon to good effect. The school's strength is its ability to recognise and support the diverse needs of all pupils. This ensures that barriers to learning are minimised. Safeguarding documentation and procedures are securely in place. However, at the time of the inspection, some policies lacked detail and had yet to be ratified by school governors. Since the last inspection the school has significantly improved aspects of its performance, such as improving the attendance of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs. All this demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils grow in confidence as they move through school. They thoroughly enjoy school and are exceptionally clear about how to stay healthy. Behaviour is good both within and outside the classroom. Pupils say they feel safe. Excellent links with outside agencies have been developed which support pupils' learning and development significantly. Pupils have a good understanding of the local community. However, links to promote their awareness of life in a multi-ethnic society are limited.

Teaching is good in the majority of classrooms and is based on clear assessment of pupils' learning needs. Overall, progress is good. However, in a small number of lessons the teacher's style of delivery and the curriculum offered do not match the needs of all pupils. On these occasions, learning slows down and pupils' behaviour becomes less good.

A detailed assessment system is securely in place. This ensures that monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress towards their targets is effective in all subjects. Teaching assistants provide a high level of support in most lessons. The curriculum is highly personalised and meets the needs of most pupils well. However, monitoring of the curriculum by subject coordinators is at an early stage of development.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve pupils' achievement by:
  - monitoring the curriculum effectively (particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage) to ensure that it consistently reflects the needs of all pupils in all lessons.
- Improve the quality of safeguarding policies so they reflect the level of current practice.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion by increasing and extending links with communities in the wider United Kingdom and abroad.

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

Pupils joining the school settle quickly and respond positively to their individual learning programmes. These enable pupils to work consistently and achieve well in most areas of the curriculum. This was demonstrated well in a physical education lesson for pupils with significant learning needs. All participated well, developing individual ways of moving around the apparatus. Given the nature of these pupils' learning needs, this was impressive. Very occasionally, learning slows when planned activities do not reflect pupils' needs closely enough.

All groups of pupils, including those on the autistic spectrum and those who are looked after by the local authority, make equally good progress. This is because learning environments are specifically designed to meet the needs of differing groups of pupils. For example, in the classroom for pupils with the greatest learning needs resources and equipment are bright, colourful and stimulating. Conversely, the classrooms for pupils on the autistic spectrum have subdued lighting and low levels of stimulation, ensuring that the learning needs of both groups are successfully met.

Pupils feel safe because they know staff are supportive and help them at all times. Most clearly enjoy school. One pupil commented, 'I enjoy school because we are all friends.' Pupils recognise the importance of eating healthy meals and have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. Many pupils enjoy the many and different sporting opportunities offered and appreciate the part this plays in a healthy lifestyle. This is reinforced well by the weekly awarding of a 'golden trainer' for healthy lifestyle choices. Pupils make a good contribution to the community both in and outside school by listening to and appreciating the needs of others. For example, pupils with significant learning needs are well supported at lunchtime by other pupils. Pupils' good overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in the way in which they react to each other and take care of the environment. They do not have a well-developed awareness of communities beyond those represented in the immediate locality.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers use assessment information effectively to set achievable targets for pupils. Information and communication technology is effectively used to support pupils' learning and promote independence. Planning of lessons is conscientious in most classrooms and attention is given to ensuring that work is modified to meet the different needs of pupils. Marking of pupils' work takes many forms and ensures that they are aware of what is needed to improve. Support staff are effectively trained and work closely with teachers to support pupils' learning.

The curriculum is well organised and is highly personalised to meet the needs of pupils. It is imaginatively enhanced by many visits and activities away from the classroom. Residential visits help develop pupils' independence. For example, a recent visit to a local outdoor pursuit centre enabled pupils to develop team-building skills as well as offering them a range of outdoor experiences. This was described by one pupil as 'the most exciting place I have ever been to'.

As a result of high-quality care, guidance and support, pupils feel there is always someone who will listen and help. A careful and thorough assessment is undertaken when pupils arrive at the school, which is then used to target support effectively. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well supported and this is helped by the

<sup>1</sup> 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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excellent links with many outside agencies. Attendance has been low in the past. It is currently rising rapidly as a result of careful monitoring by staff and the building up of strong relationships with parents and carers. Transition arrangements are securely in place and pupils are well prepared for moving to the next phase in their education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The insightful and visionary leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders is moving the school forward well and ensuring good outcomes for pupils. This, coupled with excellent partnerships forged with outside agencies, is driving improvement further. The governing body has implemented good procedures to ensure the health and well-being of all pupils. Governors offer a good level of support to the school and challenge to senior leaders. Procedures ensure that all government safeguarding requirements are met and that practice is of a satisfactory standard. The strength and quality of these procedures mean that any safeguarding issues are dealt with effectively by senior leaders. However, written policies do not reflect the best of such documentation. As a result, safeguarding can only be judged as satisfactory. Leaders and managers have ensured that the school is a highly inclusive community. Systems to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination within school are good. The school works hard and successfully to eliminate any gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils. Leaders have built successful links which benefit pupils and the local community. The school readily shares its expertise through its outreach service. Some links with the global community are established. However, there are too few links to other communities to improve and develop pupils' understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society. The school makes great efforts to engage all parents and carers. The work of school staff ensures that they are kept well informed about their children's successes. Education programmes for parents and carers, and daily diary links with home are in place and, as a result, parents and carers are highly appreciative of the ongoing work of the school. The school ensures good outcomes for pupils, many of whom have significant needs. It does this on a well-controlled budget and provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage has undergone considerable changes since the last inspection, including the development of an offsite community nursery provision in partnership with Sure Start and Barnados. In this part of the provision children on the autistic spectrum make excellent social and emotional progress. They learn well and play happily alongside mainstream peers. Children with significant learning difficulties make good progress in classes in the main school alongside older children. However, Reception-age children with social, emotional and behavioural problems do not have access to the same learning opportunities and Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result, their progress towards the early learning goals is less good. Most children learn the importance of sharing and of making correct choices. Provision in most areas of the school is good and improving. The assessment of children's progress is accurate and rigorous. Teaching is good and in some areas outstanding. However, it is sometimes weakened when it becomes too formal and prescriptive rather than allowing children more opportunities to learn through play and experiment. The care, guidance and support of children is of the same good quality as in the rest of the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed. Parents and carers have commented on how pleased they have been with the arrangements made to help their children settle in quickly. Excellent links exist between parents and carers and staff, and also with many other professionals and agencies involved in the care and support of children and families.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The inspection team received 15 responses from parents and carers. This represents approximately 25% of the school population and was a moderately low response rate. The vast majority of questionnaires were wholly positive and supported the work of the school. These matched the views of the inspection team.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashgate Specialist Support Primary 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 15 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 62 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	87	2	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	87	2	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	87	2	13	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	87	1	7	0	0	1	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	80	2	13	1	7	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)	10	67	4	27	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	80	3	20	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	80	3	20	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	73	3	20	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	80	2	13	1	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	93	1	7	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School, Manchester, M22 5DR

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. It was lovely to meet you all and to hear how much you enjoy coming to school. We send a special 'thank you' to those of you who gave up your time to talk to us. We agree with those of you who told us that you think your school is good.

These are the things we liked the most:

- the friendly welcome you all give to visitors
- the good way in which staff care for you and help you to make future choices
- the way in which you all work hard and have fun
- the way in which you help each other and the local community.

In order to make your school even better we have asked your teachers to:

- ensure that the younger children in the school learn in the way which is best for them
- give you more opportunities to experience other cultures to help you to get a better understanding of how other people live their lives
- ensure that all policies are up to date.

Thank you once again for such a lovely welcome, and good luck to you all in winning the golden trainer.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marian Thomas

Lead inspector

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