

Hebden Green Community School

Woodford Lane West, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 4EJ

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and her deputies have set a clear direction for the school and inspired middle leaders and other staff to follow this path with great enthusiasm and impact.
- Teaching and support staff combine exceptionally well with school-based therapists to ensure that all pupils receive the utmost care and attention in order for them to reach their full potential.
- Different groups of pupils, including those who are eligible for pupil premium funding, learn to the best of their ability, matching and sometimes exceeding the progress made by their peers in reading, writing, mathematics, communication and in their physical and social development.
- The sixth form is outstanding because leaders ensure that every student has the opportunity to study, experience work-related learning and achieve accreditations that match their different ability levels. As a result, students grow in self-confidence and develop exceptionally good independent living skills.
- The behaviour of all pupils in all contexts is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional, especially when learning together in the classroom.
- Partnerships with parents and with local mainstream schools and businesses are extremely positive and enhance the role of the school in the community, contributing greatly to pupils' learning and independent skills.
- Senior leaders and the well-informed governing body have ensured that the quality of teaching is checked and analysed exceptionally well to inform staff training needs. There is now even greater evidence of outstanding teaching than in the previous inspection, particularly in the sixth form and in the teaching of literacy.
- Middle leaders do not yet include formal lesson observations in their work and so they do not contribute as fully as they might to improving learning.
- The impressive system for gathering evidence of pupils' achievements could be even better if staff collected a greater amount of visual or other types of evidence to show more precisely what pupils have learned.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 full or part lessons taken by 14 teachers, one sports coach and a visiting music specialist. The headteacher conducted two joint observations with an inspector.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of Governors, three parent governors and a local authority representative.
- Discussions were held informally with individual pupils and with two groups of pupils representing the younger and older ends of the school.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and the school's records of pupils' progress.
- School documents, such as the school's self-evaluation report, the school improvement plan, performance management policy and quality of teaching folder, school policies on inclusion, safeguarding, child protection, curriculum, behaviour and attendance were considered.
- Recent questionnaire surveys of staff and pupils' opinions about the school were taken into account.
- The 14 responses from Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, were taken into account, as well as a recent school survey of parental views and a discussion held with three parent-governors in school.

Inspection team

John Ashley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Holmes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils from four to 19 years of age who have a range of disabilities and special educational needs. The largest group are those with physical disabilities. Many pupils have additional needs including moderate, severe or complex learning difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- The school has a sixth form which provides for students up to the age of 19.
- The school has residential provision which is separately inspected. About half of all pupils, mostly of secondary age, stay one night per week or partake in extended provision during evening sessions.
- The majority of pupils are boys.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is higher than the average. This is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There is a small minority of pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school also admits pupils from the neighbouring local authorities of Cheshire East, Warrington and Trafford.
- The school has links with Alder Hey Hospital School to help meet the educational needs of pupils at home recovering from illness or health-related reasons.
- The school has strong partnerships with other local special schools (Cheshire West and Chester Special School Headteachers (CWASSH), and Cheshire Special Schools Consortium (CSSC) and the Winsford Education Partnership (WEP).
- The headteacher provides input into and training for the Best Practice Network (BPN), set up to deliver better outcomes for children and young people across the country.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the role of middle leaders so that they can partake in formal lesson observations to better equip them to contribute fully to further improvements to students' learning.
- Further develop student achievement and learning records to include more visual or other types of evidence that can then be shared with students and parents.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding. All pupils are working at standards well below those expected nationally for their age, but they make good or outstanding progress in all aspects of learning from their various starting points as well as in their physical and social development. They like the school's system for providing clear marking and feedback of their work so that they know what they need to do next to improve. This does not always include photographic evidence to remind some pupils in some subjects about what they have achieved, particularly those with severe or profound learning difficulties.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress by the time they reach Key Stage 1. They have grown in confidence in their physical movements and coordination and are able to communicate their needs verbally or through signing and reference to visual symbols. The most able have learnt to recognise letters and sounds so that they can read and spell simple words.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils indicate their views and opinions by selecting from different options, for example at snack time. Non-verbal pupils make reference to their communication books or use appropriate gestures to indicate their needs. Most are able to match picture cards to parts of the bodies and some can draw and label their own pictures. By the end of this key stage, the great majority of pupils have made good or outstanding progress in all areas.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils have developed more formal skills and have a love of reading and writing. For example, they shared a text together when the story was set alongside pictures. Physically disabled pupils make specific choices when using a switch or the symbol system. In a mathematics lesson observed by an inspector, more academically able pupils collected information from a survey and made tally charts. By the time pupils move into Year 7, the majority of pupils have made good or outstanding progress in their academic, physical and social development.
- The most able pupils in Key Stage 3 show exceptional knowledge and understanding in their independent writing skills. This was seen in an English lesson when pupils were responding to a game where they had to give examples of adjectives or obscure terms, like 'pathetic fallacy'! Less able pupils responded very well when spending time in their new Key Stage 3 class for September. They show interest and enjoyment in what they do, for example during a story about a forest when additional sounds and pictures were added. The Year 7 catch-up funding the school receives has been well-used to ensure that pupils that have not made the progress they should have in literacy and numeracy are now making progress in line with their peers.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 respond well to the high expectations and challenge from their teachers so that all groups continue to make good or outstanding progress in their learning by the time they leave. For example, an able group of pupils demonstrated outstanding knowledge and understanding of poetry of the First World War poets; a great example of how the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils have had equal opportunities to achieve accreditation or a work experience placement. Some higher ability pupils achieve up to four GCSEs, including English. The school does not enter pupils early to complete GCSE courses.
- Sixth form students thrive in their provision. Regardless of their needs and abilities, each student engages enthusiastically in lessons, taking seriously the opportunity to work in teams to perform music, creating menus from raw materials, making podcasts or writing accurately and in detail about their activities. Less able students again show great enjoyment in and enthusiasm for learning, for example when recording and talking about their findings in a mathematics lesson that involved a wheelchair race! All students, by the end of their time in the sixth form, have made good or outstanding progress and all enter work, further education or training.
- Reading is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils read regularly and with enjoyment. Younger pupils practise and improve in their knowledge and use of letters and sounds.
- Additional sports funding has been used very effectively, for example when physically disabled

Key Stage 4 pupils practised and improved their athletic skills.

- In all key stages, pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make the same levels of progress as their peers in reading, writing, mathematics and communication.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching continues to be outstanding. There is even more evidence that this is the case because leaders have addressed the area for improvement from the last inspection so that assessments of pupils are well used to inform lesson planning. As a result, pupils of higher ability are achieving even better results and making outstanding progress. Senior leaders continue to check the quality of teaching, sharing their findings with staff so that resultant training leads to even more improvements. Middle leaders oversee the sharing of good practice at the school, but do not yet conduct formal lesson observations to equip them better to contribute fully to school improvement.
- The partnership between teachers, teaching assistants and school-based therapists is outstanding. There is exceptional teamwork and planning so that every pupil at the school is accurately assessed in regard to his or her physical, academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs. This information is expertly used to group pupils in ways that best target and provide for their needs.
- Early Years Foundation Stage children and Key Stage 1 pupils are interested and enthusiastic learners and this was witnessed when staff introduced different materials and resources to help illustrate a story which then became meaningful to them.
- Because all staff in each key stage consistently make use of the excellent marking and feedback system, pupils understand what they have achieved in lessons and what they need to do to improve. This encourages and motivates pupils to greater efforts, especially in their reading and writing skills. Although visual and photographic evidence does often feature in this aspect of the school's work, this is not always the case in all subjects and classes and so some pupils struggle to remember all that they have done.
- Classrooms throughout the school are exceptionally well designed to encourage pupils to learn and improve in their work, especially when written work is celebrated in books and displays. Outdoor learning areas are creatively used to meet the needs of all pupils, not just those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example in a Key Stage 2 geography lesson.
- Because of outstanding subject knowledge combined with a deep insight into pupils' needs and abilities, teachers and teaching assistants push the boundaries with higher ability Key Stage 3 pupils, for example when successfully challenging them to recognise and explain complex writing terminology. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are exceptionally well-promoted by staff that care deeply for their pupils and want only the best for them.
- Teachers work particularly well with their teaching support colleagues so that the level of support is carefully pitched to suit the precise needs of the pupils. This was very apparent when a sixth form group were tasked to work out how best to make a meal from an assortment of raw materials. The teaching assistant gave excellent prompts to encourage the group to make headway. Students were given the responsibility to share out tasks between themselves and then report back their findings to the whole group.
- The teaching of physical education and swimming are rightly seen as particularly important within the context of a school that provides for many pupils with physical disabilities. Excellent subject knowledge and expertise in these areas ensures that careful assessment of pupils' physical capabilities leads to appropriately high expectations and challenge so that, for example, pupils with coordination difficulties were able to practise and improve their backstroke swimming styles following expert coaching and guidance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils take responsibility for their actions in lessons and out of the classroom. There is no evidence of graffiti or litter around the school. Displays are attractive and cared for with a focus upon the celebration of pupils' work, for example the 'once upon a time...' story board. Pupils take a pride in their own and in each other's achievements.
- Pupils are extremely positive about their school. They feel valued by staff within a harmonious and nurturing school community. This is extended to after-school clubs or one-night stay overs in the residential section where pupils can further develop their independence and self-help skills.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are invariably positive. They show enthusiasm in all they do and have a thirst for learning. Because staff throughout the school know their pupils so well, there is calm, consistent management at all times. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility for their actions.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils know about different types of bullying, including over the internet. They feel absolutely safe and cared for in school and state that if there was any bullying, it would soon be dealt with by staff. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Pupils learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol in personal, health and social education lessons. They talk and write knowledgably about this subject.
- Pupils who are vulnerable are extremely well cared for. Links with families and the work of on-site therapists or outside agencies ensure that any attendance, health or medical issues are quickly picked up and addressed. As a result, there is barely any unauthorised absence. Pupils who are absent because of medical needs receive support through links with Alder Hey Hospital School as and when required.
- One parent stated in a recent survey: 'What we have experienced at Hebden has far surpassed any expectations we had'. This view was further promoted by a small group of parents in school who could find no faults, only strengths.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's clear sense of direction inspires other stakeholders towards relentless school improvement. The local authority has every confidence in the school's work, providing it with only 'light-touch' support.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Senior staff conduct regular checks on the quality of teaching, providing clear and helpful feedback to teachers and teaching assistants to inform further professional development. Middle leaders have a very positive impact, for example in the development of an outstanding sixth form and the teaching of literacy across different subjects. Their roles and responsibilities are set to be further developed as they start to conduct formal lesson observations independent of senior leaders.
- The whole-school policy for marking pupils' work and providing feedback is used consistently by all staff. Pupils like it because they know what they have achieved and what to do next. Occasionally, evidence of pupils' achievements and progress are not presented in a visual or varied form to be fully meaningful to pupils and parents.
- The school's self-evaluation report is accurate and is informed by exceptionally good pupil information systems and moderation of pupils' work by all staff. This information is very well-used in teachers' planning so that every pupil is appropriately challenged in lessons.
- Arrangements to check the performance of staff are rigorously applied. Teachers benefit from assessing their own skills against the nationally agreed Teachers' Standards. Follow-up lesson observations by leaders lead to useful and informative discussions about continual professional development needs of staff.
- The curriculum is wide-ranging and exciting. Pupils have the chance to attend educational visits, for example an adventure farm or Liverpool Museum, so that they have first-hand experiences

from which they can develop their reading, writing, mathematical and communication skills. Computers and other technology are well-used for research purposes or to enable greater access to learning for disabled pupils. Provision for music is outstanding. Sports funding is used to fund a sports coach who provides after-school activities, for example in cricket and football, and training for teaching support assistants.

- Because of the extremely welcoming, nurturing, inclusive yet challenging school environment, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well-promoted as is the school's equal opportunity policy. Every pupil has the chance to succeed.
- Partnerships with parents and other professionals are very strong. These influence an integrated approach to fully meeting the needs of all pupils. Links with the residential provision further promote pupils' independent living skills.
- There are very effective wider partnerships with local special and mainstream schools. Higher ability sixth form students have the opportunity to study advanced level courses with their mainstream peers. The headteacher shares best practice at the school with a wider network of schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very well-informed about the school's work because they are regular visitors and have specific roles. The Chair of Governors visits weekly and attends 'learning walks' in order to follow up detailed headteacher reports about the quality of teaching. Governors are fully involved in agreeing the use of different funding that comes to the school. They know that the pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch up funding has been allocated towards the purchase of computer technology to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, or providing additional support to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes. Governors know that these targeted groups are now making progress in line with their peers. Governors have regular training, for example in safeguarding and safer recruitment. Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and there is a named governor for this area and for child protection.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111505
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	439963

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	96
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pete Gaskell
Headteacher	Alison Ashley
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
Telephone number	01606 594221
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