



Hope School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106543
LEA Wigan
Inspection number 277585
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Rosemary Eaton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Kelvin Grove
School category	Community special		Marus Bridge
Age range of pupils	2 to 19		Wigan, Lancashire WN3 6SP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 824150
Number on roll	157	Fax number	01942 230361
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Rawlinson
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr P Dahlstrom

Age group 2 to 19	Inspection dates 16 November 2005 - 17 November 2005	Inspection number 277585
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a school for pupils with severe or profound and complex difficulties. Some have additional needs such as autistic spectrum disorders. Currently, three are under the age of 3, nine are in the Foundation Stage, and 28 in the sixth form. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A tiny number are asylum seekers, 'looked after', or have English as an additional language. Pupils' homes are in Wigan Metropolitan Borough or surrounding local authorities. The school incorporates an inclusive Sure Start Early Excellence Centre.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Hope is an outstanding school. In this, the inspectors' judgement matches the school's own view of its effectiveness. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is outstanding although, owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the levels at which they work are significantly lower than those of pupils in mainstream schools. The school provides extremely well for children in the Foundation Stage, so their achievement is also outstanding. Pupils' personal development is exceptionally good. Whatever barriers they have to overcome, they respond extremely positively to the school's expectation that they become as independent as possible. Behaviour is outstanding, and pupils look out for each other, support a wide range of charities, and care for the environment. Teaching and learning are outstandingly good, with the information gathered about each pupil used to the full in order to provide them with exactly the right tasks and stimulation to enable them to steam ahead. The excellent curriculum entirely supports pupils' progress and personal development, being organised extremely carefully so as to be relevant to their needs, ages and interests. Partnerships with other schools extend significantly the opportunities provided. Pupils are looked after exceptionally well, very effective co-operation with parents and a variety of professionals - such as therapists - helping to ensure that all needs are met, however complex. The school's enormous success stems from its first-rate leadership and management. The headteacher's own relentless drive for excellence is mirrored fully in all staff and governors. This results in a school that has moved on very significantly since its previous inspection, has outstanding potential for further development, and provides extremely good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school considers its sixth form to be outstanding and the inspection bears this out. Students achieve exceptionally well, gaining accreditation for almost all their work. They learn important skills, such as travelling independently and cooking, and experience the world of work. The sixth form is led and managed extremely well, with an utter determination to offer a college environment and prepare students for their adult lives. These goals are achieved fully.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no specific recommendations because the school has already identified a wide range of developments to add even more to the exceptional quality of education it provides.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the levels at which pupils work are significantly lower than those expected for their age. However, they make excellent progress and their achievement is outstanding. The school judged achievement to be good, reflecting the mixed success in meeting the annual targets for particular year groups. However, this was owing to the targets not being linked sufficiently to individual pupils' starting points. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a flying start, achieving exceptionally well. They benefit significantly from working and playing alongside children who do not have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Throughout the school, pupils make excellent progress in learning to communicate, often using alternative methods to replace or augment speech. These skills equip pupils to learn outstandingly well across the board. A number do so well that they spend some or all of their time in mainstream schools, whilst others transfer from the classes exclusively for those with profound and complex difficulties to the less specialised ones. Pupils with the most complex medical needs are helped to retain their skills for as long as possible.

Older pupils and sixth form students follow courses leading to external accreditation. For instance, during Years 10 and 11, all pupils are successful in the Transition Challenge course, recognising their achievements in important life skills. Mainstream links enable small numbers to gain other accreditation, such as modules in GCSE science. In the sixth form, most of the students' work is accredited. At the end of 2004, six of the nine leavers achieved the Towards Independence award, whilst the achievements of the three higher attainers included a nationally recognised youth award at Bronze level and National Vocational Qualification Level 1 in catering.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils behave incredibly well and show very positive attitudes. One parent judges the school to be 'fantastic' at meeting the needs of those with challenging behaviour. Pupils respond extremely positively to social situations. For example, at break times, younger ones sit together pleasantly and use their picture exchange communication system to choose from the array of healthy snacks available. Independence and choice-making build progressively through the school, including for those with profound and complex difficulties. All grow in confidence. A small number of pupils use wheelchairs to navigate the school independently. With skilful support, some older pupils travel independently, for instance, to college - a huge achievement. These are attributes that stand pupils in very good stead for their future lives. Development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the world around them and to do whatever they can for others. For example, they support a range of charities and their ecological work has been recognised by a national award. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative and be enterprising. The school council petitioned successfully for a shelter at the local bus

stop and sixth form students run a profit making business. Relationships are excellent, pupils feel safe, and they have a voice in suggesting how the school can improve further. Punctuality and attendance are very good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstandingly good and this is a key factor in pupils' exceptional achievement. Teachers use their knowledge of each pupil to match activities accurately to what they need to learn next. For example, in an English lesson for pupils in Years 8 and 9, tasks ranged from composing sentences independently, describing Mr and Mrs Twit, to choosing collage materials to represent their unsavoury appearance. Extremely effective partnerships between teachers, teaching assistants, and therapists, contribute very strongly to pupils' learning, staff sharing a clear determination to enable every pupil to achieve as well as they can. For instance, methods of communication are chosen carefully to help each pupil play a full part in lessons and gain confidence and independence. Teachers are encouraged to develop specialist expertise - such as teaching Foundation Stage children - and regularly share this with colleagues in other schools.

A broad range of assessment systems builds up a detailed picture of what pupils have learned and how fast they are moving on. The information collected is analysed carefully and used extremely effectively - for example, by teachers when planning lessons and setting targets for individual pupils, and by subject leaders when checking that the curriculum is suitably balanced or accredited courses are matched to pupils' needs. The deputy headteacher has very recently improved the way in which whole school targets are established.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is exciting and stimulating, reflecting pupils' changing needs as they mature. The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to encourage children to try new experiences, helping them to make progress in all areas of learning, with the outdoor environment used imaginatively to provide further opportunities. At the other extreme, sixth form students are given permission to be young adults, learning and practising the key skills needed in everyday life, the world of work, and further education. At every stage, the curriculum is adapted to meet pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities so, for example, those with profound and complex difficulties are challenged to use all their senses. Lessons in mainstream schools and colleges extend the experiences offered and support pupils' achievement and personal development extremely well. Staff work very creatively to enrich the curriculum and motivate pupils. For instance, weeks dedicated to topics such as raising awareness of other cultures result in learning and enormous fun. Visits enhance pupils' achievement, give them

opportunities to practise social skills, and alert them to community facilities such as libraries and museums.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding because every pupil is known as an individual. Their successes are celebrated and their needs are supported extremely effectively, regardless of their complexity. Staff help parents to become genuine partners in their children's learning. Provision never stands still - for example, sixth form staff are currently looking closely at additional sources of accreditation for their more able students. The skills of a broad range of professionals are used very effectively to support pupils although, in addition to their teaching, school staff carry out much of the medical assistance that a nurse might otherwise deliver. This is taking up an increasing amount of time as more pupils with complex needs join the school. Child protection and health and safety procedures pay thorough and effective attention to pupils' well-being. Induction and transfer arrangements are carefully organised, to enable young children to settle in quickly and prepare the oldest students for moving on.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Superb leadership and management have built a spirit where pupils, staff, governors and parents strive tirelessly for the best. This is why the school's leaders judged this aspect to be good, good rather than outstanding. They felt there is always more to do. This culture of self-improvement has resulted in provision about which parents pay the highest compliments, such as 'My child benefits from every day in school'.

All aspects of the school are continuously examined and developments are carefully measured in terms of their impact on pupils' learning. A major factor in the school's success is the way staff work together to evaluate the school's performance. As a result, the school constantly looks to the future; priorities are clearly identified and agreed.

Governors play an extremely valuable part in supporting staff in ensuring high-quality provision for all pupils, regardless of the complexity of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their expertise is used to the full. At a time of change within the local authority, the school has maintained the strengths identified through the last inspection and moved forward even further. The school ensures the very best for each pupil and supports this with extremely strong links with other schools and colleges. For example, outreach support is offered to mainstream pupils. One headteacher commented on how much the links with Hope are treasured. The school sets itself at the heart of the community. It is extremely well placed to build on this as it applies for Specialist College status in sensory and/or physical needs.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We know that some of you find reading difficult, so your teachers will tell you what is in this letter.

What we liked best about your school:

- you all work really hard, are kind to each other, and behave very well
- the older pupils and college students pass lots of exams
- your teachers find very many exciting things for you to do, which help you to learn
- all the adults in school do their best to make sure you are all safe and happy
- Mr Dahlstrom keeps finding new ways to make your school even better
- we think you are very lucky to go to such a brilliant school.