

Mayfield School

Gloucester Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 3HN

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All who attend have levels of ability much lower than pupils in mainstream schools. Despite their low starting points, pupils make good progress in their education. For some, progress is outstanding.
- Pupils make great personal gains. Many begin to overcome aspects of their learning difficulties and disabilities. They are prepared well for moving on to the next stages of their lives and they demonstrate outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils do so well because of the good teaching and superb care given by all staff. The very youngest make excellent progress because for them the teaching is outstanding.
- Excellent relationships encourage the good behaviour of the pupils. Often their behaviour is outstanding.
- Where they can, pupils report that they feel very safe and secure. They enjoy coming to school and attend well. Parents are enthusiastic about Mayfield and supportive of the school.
- The sixth form is good. Each student has a course of study designed just for them. All successfully gain qualifications.
- Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher is prudently steering the school through an unsettled period. Senior leaders and middle managers continue to improve the quality of lessons. For example, pupils make excellent progress in gaining communication and reading skills.
- The governing body is improving rapidly. It provides support and challenge to the school and members know what is going on there.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress made in most lessons is not yet as good as it could be. This is because some chances are missed to help pupils learn, when they wait passively to share activities or take turns. Also, teachers do not always make clear to pupils exactly what is expected of them in the lesson.
- Teaching assistants are not being used to full effect because teachers do not always provide clear instructions as to their role in supporting pupils in the classroom.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors spent more than five hours in classrooms and observed seven teachers in 13 lessons. They watched pupils arrive in the morning, observed lunchtime activities, one whole-school assembly and a physical activity related to Movement Opportunities Via Education (M.O.V.E.).
- Pupils' work and their learning records were studied. The inspectors listened to pupils read as part of their classwork.
- Where it was possible, inspectors spoke with pupils and sixth form students during lessons and around the school to gain their views and opinions.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, other members of the senior team, middle managers including the communication and language specialist, teachers, other workers, four members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- The views of staff were noted through meeting them and by scrutinising their returned questionnaires.
- The inspectors met with four parents. They took further account of their views by examining the 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and by looking at the school's own survey.
- The work of the school was observed and documents concerning self-evaluation, planning, safeguarding, attendance and pupils' progress were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Terence McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Potter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mayfield admits boys and girls with a range of special educational needs. The majority experience severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. A minority have extreme communication problems including autistic spectrum conditions. An increasing number have very complex learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Pupils can start here at any age but many join the school when they are very young, between the ages of two and five. Most continue beyond the school leaving age into the sixth form. Around one third of the school is known to be eligible for the pupil premium and this is high compared to most other schools.
- There are slightly more boys than girls and the great majority come from White British backgrounds. All have a statement of special educational needs.
- There are no formal partnerships and the school does not use any alternative provision. Most pupils between 14 and 19 years undertake some form of work experience off site, always accompanied by members of Mayfield staff. No work experience occurred at the time of the inspection.
- Since the last inspection the previous headteacher has retired. The acting headteacher took up the post at the beginning of September 2012, having led the school as deputy headteacher throughout the most part of the previous year. An associate deputy headteacher has been temporarily allocated to the school for the current term and there have been recent changes in middle management.
- Since the last inspection the school has achieved re-designation of its specialist status in communication and interaction. Mayfield holds the Gold Standard for Team Teach (a physical handling programme).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve even further the rate at which pupils make progress by ensuring that:
 - the targets for learning set by teachers are properly shared with pupils each lesson
 - teachers plan lessons without the need for pupils to wait either for activities or to take turns
 - teaching assistants are clearly directed to support pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Throughout the school, all groups of pupils do well in their lessons. This is a great improvement since the last inspection. For those of pre-school age and the youngest in primary classes, progress is outstanding. This means that they are well prepared for future learning.
- Teachers gather information regularly to show how much success pupils experience in their learning. These records demonstrate that boys and girls make equally good progress and this was confirmed by the inspectors' observations.
- The specialism in communication and language shines through the work of the school because almost all learn to communicate in some way. This is because the adults are trained to teach pupils how to communicate through, for example, taking part in special language development lessons. In one of these, pupils were observed singing, clapping and dancing in a way carefully planned by the teacher to help them link words to actions.
- Of those who cannot speak some use signing and picture words to make themselves understood. Adults are skilful and get the best from the pupils so they can all join in.
- Following naturally from their great gains in communication, those pupils who are capable learn to read. For many, their progress in reading has been profound throughout the last year. This comes from the new and successful ways of teaching reading that the school has adopted, including putting together the sounds that letters make (phonics).
- The developments in reading for those known to be eligible for the pupil premium have been successfully supported by new items that have been purchased for them such as tablet computers and library books.
- Those aged 14 to 19 undertake the Personal Progress qualification in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Each has the course adjusted to their needs and interests and all gain the qualification according to their own level of ability. Students in the sixth form make good progress through this course.
- Occasionally, pupils do not achieve as much in lessons as they should. This happens when teachers do not clearly explain to them what is expected or when pupils have to wait to take turns in activities. Sometimes pupils miss chances to learn when teaching assistants are not given clear enough instructions about the support to be provided.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection so that now it is good overall and sometimes it is outstanding.
- Teachers have received help in improving their teaching through being trained to plan lessons better. Consequently, lessons are now much less about what teachers do and much more about what pupils will learn through individually tailored activities.
- In a short period of time the staff have established the school as a centre of excellence in promoting pupils' communication and language developments. This was made obvious during an English lesson where a teacher was seen using signing, picture communication and speech all at the same time. This, together with effective use of other aids to help pupils move about in class, resulted in a very high level of participation by pupils despite their difficulties. As a consequence, they made outstanding progress.
- In the best lessons, such as those provided for the youngest pupils, teachers provide activities that are very well matched to their needs and abilities. Excellent use is made of time, and learning takes place very rapidly indeed.
- Teachers collect information about pupils' learning and update their records regularly. They share the information with school leaders who then check it to see if any pupils are falling behind. Teachers also keep folders that show the things that pupils do in their everyday learning

and the progress they make in their personal developments throughout the school.

- Pupils are very well cared for. Many have demanding medical conditions that require constant attention and personal care. Nevertheless, staff ensure that the minimum learning time is wasted when dealing with these matters.
- Pupils gain self-confidence and self-esteem through the activities provided by staff beyond the classroom. For example, the Movement Opportunities Via Education (M.O.V.E.) programme helps some to learn new ways of moving. This encourages them to look after themselves and move around more independently. Consequently, they become able to join in with a wider range of activities and take part in learning beyond school.
- Where teaching is sometimes less effective it is because teachers do not explain clearly the individual pupils' targets for learning. Occasionally, teachers do not plan well enough for the work of teaching assistants and pupils are left waiting to take part in activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and throughout the school is good and often outstanding. It is best when pupils are fully occupied and not waiting to take turns.
- The management of behaviour by the staff has changed since the last inspection. Recent training has helped them understand how to support pupils to control the anger and frustration that sometimes results from their learning difficulties and disabilities. Behaviour is also better because lessons are more interesting. Consequently, pupils are more involved and rarely bored in class.
- As a result of this training, staff physically handle pupils less when managing their behaviour. Furthermore, exclusions from school are now almost unknown. Inspectors observed the designated 'safe spaces' being properly used for pupils to retreat to when they need to be alone for a few minutes.
- Pupils say, where they can, that they feel very safe at school. This view is supported by parents and by staff who report that bullying and harassment are unknown. Whenever pupils leave the site, such as to attend work experience, they are accompanied by school staff trained in safeguarding and first aid so that they are always safe and provided with the correct care.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with that expected for a school of this nature and is supported by arranging medical appointments for pupils to be held at school whenever possible.
- From the excellent beginnings in the lower part of the school and throughout their time there, pupils demonstrate very high social and moral gains. They learn to work very well together, make friends and enjoy excellent relationships. Many come to know about right and wrong. They come to respect others through the trips and visits that they make. At the time of the inspection Mayfield was holding a week of cultural awareness and the inspectors saw pupils encountering heritages and beliefs that enhanced their cultural and spiritual developments.

The leadership and management are good

- Some aspects of leadership and management are outstanding such as that which has led the development of the school's specialism in language and communication. The way that leaders use information about the progress that pupils make is of a very high quality and has enabled them to know much more about how pupils learn. They quickly provide support to any that are not making the expected progress in their lessons.
- The acting headteacher has helped the school negotiate a tricky period in its history through her inspiring leadership. Despite recent uncertainties the morale of staff is high. They share a common sense of purpose for the best interests of pupils. The quality of teaching has improved as a direct result of leaders finding out about what happens in classrooms and providing resources and training to help staff become even better. This is shown by the recent rapid gains in pupils' reading.

- Generally, teachers manage their classrooms well and provide interesting and stimulating learning areas.
- The curriculum ensures that all have the chance to be included and that none are left out. A wide range of enrichments takes place such as lunchtime clubs, communication classes and M.O.V.E. sessions. These activities are possible because the school has trained staff to develop the skills that benefit the pupils.
- Relationships with parents are sound and supportive. For example, the school provides weekly opportunities for them to come into school to meet with others and share information. When questioned, parents were highly supportive of the school and stated that the great strength of the establishment is the staff.
- The local authority has ensured that appropriate support has been provided to the acting headteacher. Furthermore, the allocation of an associate acting deputy headteacher until the new permanent senior leaders and managers are appointed has added further strength to the leadership. The authority has a range of contracts and services that the school buys into including human resources and governor support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is improving rapidly. It understands the work of the school and has demonstrated support and challenge to senior leaders throughout the past year, for example in ensuring that pupils make the expected degree of progress or better. Records indicate that members have overseen the spending of the pupil premium funding and that all requirements for safeguarding are met. The governing body has established targets designed to further monitor and improve the work of the acting headteacher.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	119889
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	401883

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	67
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Danny Gee
Headteacher	Rachel Kay (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010
Telephone number	01257 263063
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