Elleray Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105132
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	355705
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McKenzie

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Smale
Headteacher	Margaret Morris
Date of previous school inspection	10 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons given by 10 teachers and visited activities undertaken by some Elleray Park pupils in another local primary school. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, senior staff, teachers, pupils, and five parents or carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised policies, improvement plans and 22 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

- How teaching and assessments are used to challenge pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Whether the curriculum helps pupils to develop the learning and skills required for the future.
- The degree to which the school provides care, guidance and support.
- Whether the leadership and management are effective in improving the school and maintaining high standards since the last inspection.

Information about the school

Elleray Park educates pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Since the last inspection the school has grown and two classrooms have recently been added so that the school is now of broadly average size compared with other similar schools. These changes have occurred to enable Elleray to admit a further group of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and these now constitute about one third of the school population. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and can enter the school at any time during their primary education; many begin during the Early Years Foundation Stage. Since the last inspection the school has introduced some extended services and provides facilities for pupils in an after-school club and during holidays. Elleray Park has a low number of pupils from minority-ethnic groups compared to regional proportions and the number known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. At the time of the inspection there were no children in the school below the age of three. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its Healthy Schools Status and gained accreditation with the National Autistic Society.

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? 1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement 1

Main findings

This excellent school provides outstanding education and care for pupils. Elleray Park is held in very high esteem by parents and carers and by the local authority. A typical comment offered by a parent or carer was, 'Nothing is ever too much at this school; above and beyond is the norm.' Despite their extreme learning difficulties, pupils attend very willingly, feel very safe and make outstanding contributions in lessons and beyond. Their behaviour is outstanding and they greatly improve their social skills and personal development so that they can participate in high-quality learning experiences on site and in other places such as in another local primary school. The extended school provides opportunities for pupils to take part in sports and physical activities and pupils' outstanding acceptance of healthy living is furthered in school through sensible meal choices. The wide range of holidays, trips and visits helps them to engage with others and find out about people from different communities and countries.

Pupils arrive with levels of attainment very much below the national averages. Nevertheless, all ages and groups make outstanding progress compared to others in similar schools. Thus, their achievements are outstanding and the development of communication skills helps them prepare for moving on to the next stages of education. Teaching is outstanding and continues to improve under the skilful leadership of the headteacher. Teachers use very sophisticated assessment systems to accurately match tasks in lessons to pupils' needs and abilities. The detailed analysis of the data produced from assessments provides information to senior managers about the quality of the school. For example, detailed records indicate that pupils make less progress in science investigations than in other subjects. The outstanding curriculum is innovative and exciting in its nature. This is because senior managers have constantly refined it to ensure that the content is appropriate for all groups of pupils regardless of their difficulties. Consequently, all are equally included and none discriminated against. Care, guidance and support for pupils are great strengths of the school and very well supported by the outstanding partnerships such as with the health professionals and therapists.

Managers are rigorous in ensuring that all statutory obligations are undertaken such as in safeguarding. In this respect the school is ably supported by the outstanding governing body. The clear vision of the headteacher is shared by the staff. Resources such as those used to aid mobility and communication are expertly employed. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning could be improved through

better outdoor facilities. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses very well because quality assurance procedures are accurate. This regular review of practice leads to action planning that is well informed and appropriate. Thus, the school maintains outstanding capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in science by providing better opportunities for science investigation work.
- As soon as possible, improve the learning experiences for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing better facilities in the outside areas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils 1

Pupils very much enjoy their learning and work hard in lessons. They behave very well and take part willingly in the activities arranged for them. As a result their achievements are outstanding. They develop their communication skills and are therefore better able to access other areas of learning. For example, one group of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties demonstrated that they were able to respond positively to explanations by adults about the forthcoming activities. Because of their difficulties, pupils' overall attainment remains much below the national average for all schools, but all make exceptional progress and all groups are fully included in learning. Thus, they are very well prepared for moving on to secondary education.

The responses provided by parents and carers indicate that pupils feel very safe in school, and this is confirmed by the pupils themselves. Attendance is high and for most it improves rapidly upon entry. Any absence is almost always related to medical issues. The curriculum encourages pupils to exercise and in this respect many are ably supported by the adults so that they can take part in games and physical activities. They eat well as a result of the careful consideration given to individual dietary needs. Many are able to make sensible choices about their food. Some outside areas are used productively by older pupils to gain experience of moving about on slopes and uneven surfaces. This adds to their self-esteem and encourages them to support each other. Through their recreational and academic work in school and off-site pupils gain high quality social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences.

Pupils support each other during lessons and at break-times. They contribute very well to the life of the school through helping to make decisions in classes and through the school council. Many undertake trips and visits that support their learning and development. Those that can, go on holidays and residential visits that provide opportunities for interaction with other communities through, for example, the school-based Cubs pack that provides for both boys and girls. Elleray Park has joined the Comenius project so that pupils and staff can exchange with others from European countries and some have already travelled abroad.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account:	**1**
Pupils' attainment[1]	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	**1**
Pupils' behaviour	**1**
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	**1**
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	**1**
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account:	**1**
Pupils' attendance[1]	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	**1**

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is outstanding overall. This is because teachers know pupils very well indeed and plan tasks to match their abilities, needs and interests. Lessons are planned very thoroughly. For example, teachers set highly focussed learning targets that help pupils to demonstrate their outstanding progress in very small steps. Pupils' attainments are recorded quickly and accurately into the school assessment systems and teachers use the information with great skill to help them plan the subsequent lessons. Classroom assistants are carefully directed to support pupils in their learning and personal care, and this they do with great skill and patience. Therefore, pupils greatly benefit through the close relationships with the adults who care for them.

Pupils follow courses that are linked to the national curriculum but fine-tuned to ensure that all gain the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to develop in all subjects including literacy and numeracy. Much work has been done to ensure that all groups have a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs and abilities. Consequently, it is very closely linked to the systems for assessment so that the necessary small steps of learning can be planned and then evaluated easily. The curriculum is enhanced by carefully planned trips and visits as part of lessons. However, there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to carry out practical investigations in science. Strong links have been formed with a local primary school that willingly accommodates Elleray Park pupils at different times throughout the week. Here, pupils are able to gain access to learning of a different kind and the experiences shared with the mainstream pupils are of benefit to all.

Pupils, parents and carers trust the adults in the school to deal with any concerns that might arise. Staff work closely together and with other professionals to ensure that, despite the need for frequent medical and other attentions, pupils spend as much time as possible in school and in lessons. Staff provide outstanding care and support across all areas of the school. For example, in welcoming pupils at the start

[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.

of the day, they are quickly made aware of any difficulties that pupils might be experiencing and they remain alert to individual needs relating to medical or communication difficulties. Parents and carers report that pupils feel very positive about the school when this might not have been the case in previous educational settings. Pupils, together with parents and carers, receive excellent guidance and advice about moving on to the next stages of education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account:	**1**
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	**1**
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	**1**

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection the headteacher and senior team have greatly improved the school through the development and implementation of highly sophisticated assessment systems. Furthermore, they have trained teachers to use assessments frequently and effectively in their planning. They have instigated a new curriculum structure that is under constant review to ensure that it meets the needs of all groups and provides all required areas of learning for pupils. The senior team regularly and accurately appraise the work of the school to ensure that all have equal opportunities to progress and that none are discriminated against. The outstanding governing body is enthusiastic and supportive but also provides appropriate challenges to the headteacher and staff. It is stable, knows its own strengths and has a good mix of talents. Governors regularly visit and they have been instrumental in helping to change the nature and resources of the school following the admittance of pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. Safeguarding practices are good with some outstanding features. For example, staff and governors have completed training in safeguarding well beyond statutory requirements and the diligence of senior staff in ensuring that pupils are kept safe is exemplary. The outstanding contributions to the community are demonstrated through charity events, the extended school and the links with the local primary school. On a wider scale, Elleray Park has forged links with schools abroad through the Comenius project that has enabled pupils to visit Germany; plans are now in place for an exchange of pupils from Poland and Turkey. Additionally, pupils are encouraged through their learning in personal, social and health education to maintain good relations with others from different backgrounds.

Parents and carers engage very well indeed with the school and they are kept extremely well informed about the education and care that their children experience every day. Staff make very good use of new technology to aid learning and communication aids and mobility devices help to engage pupils productively in classroom activities. Ellery Park, therefore, provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The outcomes for children in the early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. The achievements of children confirm that the progress they make from very low starting points is remarkable. Personal and social development is a particular strength because they develop very positive relationships with their peers and with the adults who support them. Thus, the adults know the children very well and accurately match experiences and learning to children's needs and abilities, and precise targets are set for the next stages of development. Therefore, children are motivated and enjoy coming to school.

Although there are some inconsistencies in practice, adults are well deployed to support children's learning and development and they are active in quickly and accurately recording small steps of progress. They foster an environment where children's efforts are celebrated and affirmed. There is a good balance between the children initiating their own learning and activity that is guided by adults. As a result children are active and inquisitive learners. For example, during the inspection, children enjoyed exploring the proportionality of objects during an activity involving song and movement. The highest possible level of care and support is provided by staff. However, opportunities for children to experience outdoor learning are limited by the inconsistent use of outside areas, some of which fail to match the otherwise high standard of provision. Overall, therefore, the quality of provision in the early Years Foundation Stage is good.

The leadership of Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding because the ethos allows all staff to refine their skills and contribute to the best of their ability. Very good account is taken of the need to safeguard pupils and in this respect staff are provided with high levels of training. Managers ensure that well-practiced routines are established and that the adults fully understand the expectations made of them. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage Taking into account:	**1**
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Nineteen questionnaires were returned by parents and carers and this is slightly lower than the expected rate for a school of this nature. However, Elleray Park misses no opportunity to communicate with parents and carers and to gauge their views and opinions. The great majority of parents and carers are enthusiastic and supportive of the school, including the group of parents and carers who spoke with an inspector. One parent or carer wrote to the inspection team and said, ‘I cannot express myself strongly enough just how much my son has improved with regard to progress and in all ways due to his attendance at Elleray Park.’

One parent or carer expressed a concern that related to their child and this matter was communicated to the headteacher. However, the inspection team found no evidence to support the concern during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elleray Park 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 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 81 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	77	5	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	77	5	23	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	77	5	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	82	4	18	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)	15	68	5	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	91	2	9	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 all 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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:	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. ■ 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 pupils' 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.

9 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elleray Park School, Wallasey CH45 0LH

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you in your classrooms and at break times. We were particularly impressed with your politeness and good manners.

Elleray Park is a wonderful school and the adults look after you very well indeed. We believe that you feel very safe and secure at school. You appreciate the excellent relationships that you have with each other and with the staff. You behave very well and try hard to adopt healthy lifestyles. Your contributions are outstanding because you share your learning with others extremely well in school and in other places.

Your teachers produce excellent lessons and you have plenty of exciting things to do. The headteacher, other senior leaders and the governors all work very hard to give you the best quality education. You have plenty of opportunities to get to know visitors and others outside of school. Elleray Park communicates very well indeed with your parents and carers.

The inspectors feel that some improvements could still be made. For example, we would like you to have the opportunity to experience more practical work to help you make even more progress in science. For the Early Years Foundation Stage children we want the school to improve your outside play areas and ensure that you can make full use of them.

We wish you all the best for the future and once again thank you for your help and interest in the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Terry McKenzie
Lead inspector

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