

Inspection of Mill Green School

Lansbury Avenue, Parr, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 1BU

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Mill Green School are happy and safe. Each day, staff welcome them into the warm and compassionate environment that has been created at the school. Pupils feel well cared for and supported. In turn, they display positive attitudes throughout the school day. When moving around the school, they behave exceptionally well. Pupils speak about others with respect and kindness. They understand that everyone is unique and that some pupils need more support than others.

The school has high expectations for its pupils. All pupils within the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have a thorough understanding of pupils' unique and complex needs. Pupils want to do well and are proud of their achievements. They talk with confidence about how the school has helped and supported them and of their ambitions for the future.

A well-thought-out programme to promote pupils' personal development ensures that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in education and life beyond the school. They benefit enormously from the broad range of rich experiences that are designed to help them become independent. This includes opportunities to take part in outdoor learning and award schemes, varied vocational opportunities and in-depth careers advice and support.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school ensures that pupils, including students in the sixth form, benefit from a suitably ambitious curriculum. It has taken effective action to maximise the time that pupils spend learning, while ensuring that they receive care and support for their specific needs. The broad curriculum is reflective of the school's desire for pupils to be successful. Different pathways ensure that pupils work towards a range of qualifications in academic and vocational subjects. Thorough transition planning and close working relationships with families and other agencies ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Staff ensure that the curriculum is delivered well. They use their expert knowledge of pupils' needs to make sure that pupils access learning across the curriculum. The school has ensured that, in most subjects, it has identified the knowledge that pupils should learn. However, in some subjects, there is a lack of clarity about what is to be taught and when this will happen. This prevents pupils from being supported to build their knowledge securely in these subjects.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. Since the last inspection, it has introduced a new phonics programme. However, this programme is in the early stages of implementation. It is not delivered consistently well. In addition, pupils sometimes read books that are not suitably matched to the sounds that they already know. This means that some pupils, particularly those who find reading difficult, do not become confident, fluent readers as quickly as they should.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent. Pupils consistently follow the school's rules and routines. They demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. During social times, structured activities help pupils connect and engage with one another. The school has prioritised pupils' attendance. It provides effective support to help those pupils who find regular attendance difficult.

Pupils benefit greatly from the strong emphasis that is placed on the importance of their personal development. There is an extensive offer that enriches pupils' learning and provides a range of opportunities to learn about the world. Pupils are active members of the school's eco-committee. They represent their peers as members of the school council. Sixth-form students play an active and influential role in the school community. The school ensures that pupils learn about life in modern Britain, including different religions and cultures.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to learn outdoors. They relish working with a professional disc jockey and in a podcasting station. These activities provide pupils with real-world experiences that prepare them for adulthood.

The school ensures that pupils experience vocational opportunities regularly. This includes them gaining valuable and relevant work experience in the school's community café and its gardening business. As part of the preparation for adulthood programme, students in the sixth form experience the world of work. Students participate in a range of activities, including construction skills and in-house opportunities, such as working with the school office or with the site management team.

Staff are very proud to work at the school. They value the support that they receive for their well-being, workload and continued professional development. This is reflected in their commitment to the school and its pupils. Governors know the school well. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and how to improve the school further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The phonics programme is in the early stages of implementation. It is not delivered consistently well. Sometimes, the books that pupils read are not well matched to their phonics knowledge. This stops some pupils from applying their knowledge of phonics successfully and means that they are unable to read with fluency. The school should ensure that staff receive the support that they need to successfully deliver the phonics

programme and provide reading books that more closely match the pupils' phonics knowledge.

- In some subjects, the school is not clear enough about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught. This means that, at times, pupils are not supported to build their knowledge in these subjects as well as they could. The school should ensure that it finalises its curriculum thinking in these subjects so that pupils are supported to deepen their understanding of these subjects over time.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	131022
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10377982
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Marie Quirk
Headteacher	Sean Lenahan
Website	www.millgreen.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils have education, health and care plans. The school caters for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism. Some pupils have additional sensory and physical disabilities and complex behavioural needs. Some pupils also have medical conditions.
- Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a period of growth. Plans are in place over the next 12 months to extend the school population and site further.
- The school provides some vocational aspects of its education at an additional site located at the Mill Green Centre, Sankey Street WA9 1QF.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical-education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, science and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and their views of behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.
- An inspector visited the school's additional site and considered the education that pupils receive there.

Inspection team

Lee Comber, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Cath Cooke

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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