

Broadfield Specialist School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119883
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313436
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	John Atkinson

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	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Liz Fisher
Headteacher	Mrs Jane White
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2004
School address	Fielding Lane Oswaldtwistle Accrington Lancashire BB5 3BE
Telephone number	01254 381782
Fax number	01254 396805

Age group	4–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Broadfield is a specialist school for cognition and learning. It serves pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties and those on the autistic spectrum. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and a third of them are entitled to free school meals. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Approximately one fifth do not have English as their first language. There is a very small proportion of looked after children. All pupils have the opportunity to attend a local primary or secondary school for part of their work depending on their individual needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that makes a vibrant contribution to the community and gives excellent value for money. It has made very good progress since its last inspection and its designation as a specialist school for cognition and learning in September 2006 has had a very positive impact on the overall effectiveness and inclusiveness of its provision.

The exemplary leadership of senior staff is key in fostering a very positive ethos that results in a 'can do' culture amongst staff and pupils. The leadership team's drive, enthusiasm and commitment radiate to all staff and engender high morale. The outcome is that there are very high expectations of what pupils will achieve and how their individual needs will be met. Parents readily acknowledge and praise the dedication and commitment of the staff and the impact this has on their child and them. As one parent commented, 'This is an excellent school that has not only enhanced our children's lives but also our family life.'

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. They participate in every aspect of school life with increasing confidence and independence. They share their parents' views and one school council member tellingly said, 'If I had to give this school a mark, I'd give it a thousand out of a thousand.' Pupils' achievements are outstanding. Children with autism make an excellent start in the Foundation Stage because of the exceptionally high level of individual support they receive. Pupils in all key stages make excellent progress in literacy, numeracy, science and personal and social development because of the consistently high standard of teaching and learning. Teachers' planning is very detailed and focused on addressing the individual needs of every pupil. Staff have high expectations and this leads to setting ambitious and challenging individual targets. The excellent support that pupils receive in lessons means that progress is fast and motivation is high. The school is outstanding in tracking and monitoring pupils' progress and uses this information very effectively to target specific intervention programmes that ensure pupils reach their potential. Pupils' outstanding progress in speaking, listening, reading and communication skills transforms their understanding across the curriculum. As one parent commented, 'He has started to read and write. I never thought he would do that!'

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and underpins their success in other aspects of the school's work. The personal, social and health education programme is excellent in giving pupils the knowledge about how to live a healthy lifestyle and the importance of diet and exercise. Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities and have good access to healthy eating options. A particular strength is how well sex and relationship education is taught and results in pupils being comfortable in sharing anxieties in a mature and sensitive way. All feel at ease and safe and enjoy excellent relationships with each other and staff. They say that bullying is minimal and always dealt with firmly and fairly.

Pupils have excellent involvement in the community. All have the opportunity to attend a mainstream school for part of their education and enthusiastically participate in a wide range of community activities. The curriculum is outstanding. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is most innovative in offering different pathways and prepares pupils very well for their futures. Care and guidance are outstanding. Pupils are aware of their targets and increasingly able to self-assess their own work. Although teachers mark and assess work accurately and regularly, the guidance to pupils about the steps they need to make to improve their work is not sharp enough.

Leadership and management are outstanding because very effective monitoring and evaluation procedures are implemented rigorously at all levels. Professional development for all staff is very effectively linked to the school's priorities for improvement. The outcome is a school where pupils' personal needs are fully met in an atmosphere of total trust and respect.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and children receive a very high level of personal attention, support and guidance. Their needs are assessed thoroughly and very structured activities and routines are planned to meet their individual needs. The learning environment is tailored to meet their specific needs and innovative ways of teaching communication skills are successfully implemented and result in excellent progress. Behaviour is managed with great skill and children's personal development improves rapidly as a result. Staff are very astute in assessing children's progress and use this information effectively to plan the next small steps of a child's development. This ensures that children have excellent opportunities to build upon what they are learning and develop good relationships with adults and other children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the guidance to pupils about the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve exceptionally well in literacy and numeracy. They are set challenging targets and their progress is monitored and tracked systematically. As a result, it is abundantly clear that at the end of each key stage pupils have made significant advances. They make excellent progress in their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills and the vast majority of pupils are articulate and confident in expressing opinions and writing down their ideas. In mathematics, pupils make very good progress in their understanding of number skills and have very secure knowledge and understanding of space and shapes. All pupils develop very good information and communication technology (ICT) skills and are most adept at using computer packages to support their learning. Pupils achieve very well in creative subjects such as music and art because of the innovative ways in which these subjects are taught and the high expectations that teachers have.

By the end of Year 11 pupils achieve excellent results in accredited courses in a wide range of subjects with a small number of them getting GCSEs in mathematics and art. Their economic wellbeing is very well supported because of the very good independence and work related skills that they develop. This leads to all leavers being successful in securing places in further education, employment or training.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is reflected in their growing self-esteem and maturity. The excellent ethos and relationships between staff and pupils lead to pupils being secure and safe in a very trusting and respectful environment. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Pupils

with very challenging behaviours are managed very effectively and learn how to control their feelings. Pupils enjoy coming to school which is shown in their good attendance. The structured reward system and extensive opportunities to participate in community activities through the excellent inclusion links with local schools are very effective in building pupils' confidence and determination to succeed in life. The school council is a vibrant group that acts vigilantly in making sure that pupils' opinions are expressed and acted upon.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding and leads to excellent gains in learning. Specialist school status has led to innovative approaches and a wider range of teaching styles. This has been very effective in making learning exciting and motivating pupils to work hard and push themselves. Teachers have high expectations and plan in meticulous detail to ensure that everyone is fully included in the learning, tasks are at the right level for each pupil and individual targets are met. Teachers and teaching assistants work as a close partnership and excellent teamwork establishes a very positive classroom ethos with outstanding levels of individual care and support. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the work that is set because they find it interesting, challenging and relevant.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is planned very carefully to meet the specific needs of all pupils. There is a very wide range of clubs and after-school activities. This leads to pupils trying new, and often, adventurous experiences with a strong sense of self-belief. Choice is central to their enjoyment of the curriculum and fosters their independence skills. The excellent pathways and opportunities for work experience are enormously influential in motivating older pupils, widening their horizons and raising their aspirations. The excellent links with local primary and secondary schools enable individuals to access a mainstream curriculum and mix with a wider group of pupils resulting in considerable gains in social and communications skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All staff contribute to providing a very caring, safe and supportive school where individuals feel totally valued and respected. Child protection arrangements and those to ensure everyone's health, welfare and safety are securely in place. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are extremely thorough and this means that the most vulnerable or at risk pupils are given high quality personal care and support. The systems for monitoring pupils' progress are sophisticated and support is always given to individuals and groups who are having difficulties. Staff mark work regularly but their advice to pupils about the steps they need to take to improve their work are not always sufficiently focused. The sensitivity of staff and the support they give means that pupils do not feel overawed by the challenges they face and become even more determined to succeed. Parents overwhelmingly feel that their children are well cared for and are thrilled, and occasionally surprised, with the progress they make as a result of the attention of the staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The senior leadership team provide outstanding leadership in setting out a clear vision for the school and rigorously monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its work. They actively promote new initiatives and work with great energy and enthusiasm to keep the school at the cutting edge of best practice. Subject leaders are excellent role models in their own practice and make sure that teaching and learning are very effective throughout the school. Governance is good and the school is supported and challenged to maintain its very high standards. The high quality of leadership and management throughout the school results in a very strong staff team that strives for excellence and takes full advantage of the excellent opportunities for professional development. The outcome is a staff team with high morale, total commitment and an excellent capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broadfield Specialist School, Lancashire, BB5 3BE

Thank you very much for making me so welcome on the two days I came to visit your school. The school council were very helpful in telling me why pupils think the school is so good and how everyone has such a good time. I was very impressed with how mature and sensible you were and how well you all got on as friends and helped each other. It was obvious how much you enjoyed all aspects of school and how much you had all improved in your learning over the years. I have to agree that you go to an outstanding school and the reasons are very clear to me.

- The staff are very committed to making sure that you work hard and reach your full potential.
- You all work very hard, behave very well and put enormous effort into all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher and other senior staff make sure that the school is run very effectively.

It is really important that you make the best of the opportunities school provides for you because then you will maintain the really good progress you already make and have better chances when you leave.

I have discussed with the headteacher what the school can do to get even better and we agreed that the staff will give you clear advice about the next steps you need to make to improve your work.

I hope you all carry on working hard and enjoying school. I know that you are very determined young people and I wish you well for the future.

Best wishes

John Atkinson

Lead inspector