

Beechcliffe Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135229
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	364044
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Michele Crichton

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Don Andrews
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 12 lessons and 12 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with staff, groups of students and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including those relating to self-evaluation, the curriculum, students' progress and safeguarding. They also took into account the views of 36 parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the inspection team.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective leadership and management are at all levels.
- How effective safeguarding practices are in the new school.
- How staff have ensured students settle quickly into the new school, regarding their personal development and their learning.
- How positively students are responding to the changes that have taken place.

Information about the school

Following Bradford's reorganisation of special school provision, Beechcliffe School was established in April 2010. Until its purpose-built school was ready, it functioned on two separate sites the former Braithwaite School and the former Branshaw School. Pupils at Beechcliffe School had attended these two schools but staff have come from special schools across Bradford. The school caters for students with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties. Additionally, there are some students who display challenging behaviours or have social interaction and communication difficulties. Some students have physical disabilities and multiple and complex health and medical needs. All students have a statement of special educational need and/or disability. Almost all the students are of White British heritage and the majority speaks English as their main language. A small number of students is currently in the care of the local authority. Approximately a quarter of students is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has Healthy School status and the Investors in Pupils award. Staff and students moved into the new school building on 5th May 2011. This is the school's first inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Students and staff are settling well into their new school environment. This is because leaders and managers have effectively ensured smooth transition arrangements. Parents and carers have been kept well-informed, staff morale has been buoyant and students' learning maintained throughout the process. The success in handling this move can be seen in the good behaviour of students and the warm, calm and industrious atmosphere that already pervades. Leaders and managers are reviewing current practices and procedures, making priorities and have many plans for future school development. For example, a curriculum review has already taken place to ensure it meets the needs of all students that are now within one school building. The school's leaders have correctly identified the need to further improve its effectiveness through refining the previous 'dual site' student tracking systems to ensure that the tracking of students' progress is comprehensive and linked to intended outcomes. They have prioritised this for action. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and there is satisfactory capacity to improve.

Students make satisfactory progress. The rate of learning and progress in lessons varies in response to the effectiveness of teaching which is predominantly satisfactory with some good examples of teaching. Students make similar progress in English and mathematics and by Year 11 achieve satisfactorily. Students have a good understanding of how to live healthily. Care, guidance and support and teaching are satisfactory overall. Strengths lie in the positive relationships between staff and students. However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching across the school. For example, not all teachers provide tasks and activities that engage students and match their learning needs appropriately.

Students are thoroughly enjoying being in their new school. They related that they met with each other regularly beforehand and enjoyed watching video footage of a tour of the new building before they entered. Their responses to being in their new building were very positive, with comments such as it is 'interesting', 'fantastic' and 'super-good'. Some students were reflective, relating the things that they can do now that were more difficult on previous sites. For example, there were practical benefits such as 'I can get all around school in my wheelchair now', and they welcomed the fact that hydrotherapy and the swimming pool are on site.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate students' progress by:

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- improving the quality of teaching and learning to be at least consistently good throughout the school
- ensuring that all support staff are well-deployed in lessons ensuring that all teachers provide tasks and activities that engage students and match their learning needs
- ensuring teachers' planning and individual education plans include clear learning outcomes for students.
- Further develop the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that plans to develop teaching, the curriculum and student progress tracking systems are clearly linked to students' outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Overall, students' achievement is satisfactory, for all groups of students with differing special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good learning takes place where students are actively involved in practical and meaningful activities that match their particular needs and levels of ability. For example, in one lesson, games and independent activities made students think, work out solutions to problems, take turns and co-operate well. In these lessons good progress is made. However, in some lessons progress is not as rapid when students are not sufficiently challenged, teaching assistants do not adequately support their individual learning needs, and sometimes students have little that is meaningful to do when they have completed an activity.

Students' behaviour is good. Individuals from all ages readily help each other with learning or mobility and without any prompts from adults. Any challenging behaviour is managed well by staff. Students say they feel safe in school and can turn to members of staff if they feel troubled or concerned.

Students have a good understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. This is due, for example, to the regular trips to their allotment to grow and then cook their own produce, regular swimming sessions and personal programmes of health and hygiene routines. Many students enjoy making independent and healthy food choices that their new dining room facilities offer. For some, the new 'no-cash' system also develops their independence and a sense of responsibility as they have to look after their own payment card.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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.

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is predominantly satisfactory and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. In the best lessons, pace is good, work is well-matched to the needs of the individual learner and teachers' planning is focused on students' progress. In the good-quality lessons, teachers and teaching assistants work as a team in engaging and discussing work with students, they use good questioning techniques and have high expectations of students. In the less effective lessons, too much work involves reinforcing existing learning; there is a lack of challenge for the more-able students; and teaching assistants miss learning opportunities, for example, to extend thinking skills or promote language development. Teachers' lesson planning and individual education plans do not consistently include precise learning outcomes for students. Additionally, lesson plans do not consistently provide for further learning activities if some students complete their work ahead of others.

Many plans are in place to develop provision further in the school. These include refinements to the student assessment system and to the curriculum, which are both currently satisfactory. A review has been carried out and its findings implemented in preparation for a more personalised curriculum for all students. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school is reviewing some of its arrangements for the care of

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all students located on the single site and as a result these are not yet fully embedded. However, all staff are responsive to individual students' personal needs, with established relationships in place and others that are growing quickly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior staff and governing body have done much to ensure the positive transition of Beechcliffe School on to one site. They have ensured that teaching and learning continued until the very moment of moving and that it was quickly re-established in the new building. Evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and leaders recognise its current strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and managers are taking the opportunity to evaluate all current practices and procedures systematically to ensure future school development. They know where weaknesses lie and have suitable plans to bring greater consistency to the effectiveness of teaching and assessment, including progress tracking systems, and the curriculum. Equality of opportunity and the effectiveness of procedures for tackling discrimination are satisfactory. Staff ensure there is consistency in analysing the outcomes of all student groups now that all are together in one building.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. All previous links are being maintained but some relationships are new within the school itself and with the local community, although there are many plans in place to develop them. Safeguarding is tackled thoroughly and meets statutory requirements. The school maintains its integration of safety and safeguarding into the curriculum so that students understand how to keep themselves safe. The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities conscientiously. However, this is a new governing body with some very experienced and some new governors. Although all policies are appropriately in place insufficient time has elapsed for governors to be involved fully and systematically in evaluating the school's work. There are positive links with parents and carers who are kept informed about their children's progress and development. Leaders and managers again have further developments planned, for example, with the establishment of a forum for parents and carers.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The sixth form provides a supportive education where students attain satisfactory levels and make satisfactory progress. Students report that they enjoy school and appreciate the range of options available to them. All aspects of provision, students' outcomes and leadership and management are satisfactory, except for behaviour and healthy lifestyles which are as good as in the main school. Appropriate tracking procedures guide teaching and learning. Relationships are positive and are encouraging and caring, enabling students to cooperate well. However, in some lessons this has more focus than academic learning. A range of vocational courses is offered to suit the needs, abilities and aspirations of different students. For example, there are some which focus on developing independence and life skills. Additionally there are those with greater focus on achievements in information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy. This individualised approach enables all students to leave Beechcliffe with some form of accreditation. As with other areas throughout the school there are further developments planned. These include additional course choices for students and promoting links with the co-located school, University Academy Keighley.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire was broadly average. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive about Beechcliffe School. Their views are reflected well in the comment: 'It is a very friendly 'family-like' school.' The findings of the inspection team concur with these views. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns. Inspectors discussed the issues with the school's senior leaders and were satisfied with the responses. Inspection findings support the positive views of the overwhelming majority.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beechcliffe Special 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 92 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	58	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	69	10	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	50	17	47	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	44	18	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	61	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	36	22	61	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	53	15	42	1	3	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)	19	53	15	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	50	17	47	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	53	16	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	42	19	53	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	61	13	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	61	12	33	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 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.



23 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Beechcliffe Special School, Keighley, BD20 6ED

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited you in your new school recently. It was lovely to hear how much you liked the dining area, choosing your own snacks and lunches and being able to sit outside with your friends when the weather is good. From our conversations we could tell you knew a lot about keeping healthy. We also saw you behaving well and helping each other. At the end of the two days we spent with you, we decided that Beechcliffe is a satisfactory school overall. There are strengths in your school, such as the positive relationships you have with each other and with staff. There are also some things that need developing. For you all to make good progress the inspectors have asked your teachers to make sure that:

- all support staff help you to learn as well as you can in lessons
- all your work is at the right level
- you have enough work to complete so that no learning time is wasted
- all staff expect you to work hard and achieve as well as you can
- all your teachers provide tasks and activities that make learning interesting
- teachers' planning includes clear learning outcomes
- any plans staff have to develop other areas in school clearly show how you have benefitted by them.

We know that you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michele Crichton

Lead inspector

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