

Ellar Carr

Ellar Carr Road, Thackley, BD10 0TD

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Good leadership and management over the past four terms have resulted in good improvement in the quality of teaching, in the curriculum, in pupils' behaviour and in their attainment and progress.
- The introduction of new policies and ways of working has given staff confidence and has speeded up development in all aspects of the centre's work.
- Teaching is good and this is reflected in pupils' good achievement. As a consequence of daily lessons, pupils are making significant progress in reading. Pupils' achievements in sport and art are of particular note.
- The way teachers assess and record pupils' achievements is much improved. Teachers are generally successful in matching work to pupils' ability and interests.
- In the best lessons, planning is clear about what pupils will learn; lessons are enjoyable, conducted with a sense of urgency and pitched at the right level.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils know their behaviour targets and try hard to meet them. Pupils have a much improved attitude to school. This is seen in their attendance which is now on a par with attendance in secondary schools. They have a good understanding of keeping safe.
- The new management committee keeps the leadership team on its toes by asking searching questions, particularly about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Some teachers' lesson plans are too vague and occasionally work set for pupils is too difficult. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils are clear about their learning targets in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in other subjects, especially in their spelling, grammar and sentence structure.
- Some subject leaders are new to their role and still finding their feet.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons or parts of lessons, of which three were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Discussions were held with pupils, members of the management committee, representatives of the local authority and staff, including senior and middle managers.
- The inspector took into account the parents' responses to the centre's own survey. There were no responses recorded with the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence including the centre's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents concerning safeguarding.

Inspection team

Katharine Halifax Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The centre is an authority-wide provision that caters for pupils in Key Stage 3 who have identified behavioural, social and emotional needs. Many have associated learning difficulties.
- Following changes within the local authority, the centre became a single unit in September 2011.
- In the absence of a school for such pupils, the local authority has agreed that the centre takes pupils on a long-term basis until a purpose built school opens at the start of the next academic year.
- Most pupils have been excluded from mainstream schools.
- Almost 90% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The remaining few are at school action plus, and currently undergoing statutory assessment.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium varies considerably from year to year but is, overall, well above average. Pupil premium funding is intended for the support of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of a local authority or from families in the armed forces.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- At the time of the inspection, just three girls were on roll.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up pupils' progress and raise attainment by improving the quality of teaching to that seen in the best lessons through:
 - making sure teachers' planning identifies the precise knowledge and skills pupils will acquire in each lesson
 - making sure that work is accurately matched to pupils' abilities
 - making sure pupils know and understand their half-termly targets for reading, writing and mathematics, and how to get to the next National Curriculum level.
- Narrow the gap between pupils' attainment and progress in reading and writing by:
 - improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - using fewer printed worksheets
 - developing pupils' ideas by expecting their spoken contributions to be in phrases or sentences rather than in single words
 - extending pupils' vocabulary.
- Strengthen the leadership and management of the centre through developing the role of the recently appointed subject leaders by:
 - appropriate training
 - providing opportunities for them to observe classroom practice
 - embedding the new policies and ways of working.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' attainment on entry to the centre is well below average, with many operating four or more years behind pupils of the same age. This is because of poor attendance and a poor attitude to learning. Nevertheless, pupils and their parents say once they have settled, they make greater progress than they have done for a long time.
- As teaching and the curriculum have improved, pupils are gaining new knowledge and skills at a good rate. Progress in lessons is now good for all pupils, including the disabled and those with special educational needs. The gap between their current standard and the level expected for their age is beginning to close. This has enabled a small number to make a successful return to mainstream education.
- There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils from different backgrounds or by gender. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively for a residential project that has built pupils' confidence, leadership qualities and their approach to solving problems.
- Further money from the pupil premium fund has been used to create a library and for reading schemes. Use of the library is increasing, and pupils' interest and attainment have developed well because of daily reading sessions. Pupils are more confident when reading; they are acquiring a range of skills to help them recognise new words and have a greater level of understanding. This is evident when finding information in, for example, religious education or science.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not so defined. While they have improved their presentation and handwriting, the content of their work sometimes lacks imagination and is not always well organised. Furthermore, the level of their spelling, punctuation and grammar does not compare to the standard of their reading.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils' learning is now good because the quality of teaching has improved considerably over the past year. The appointment of new teachers and effective training in teaching reading, the curriculum and assessing pupils' work have resulted in substantial improvement in what is taught and how it is taught.
- Planning is variable. In the best examples, teachers plan for the knowledge and skills pupils will acquire in each lesson rather than listing the different activities. In most lessons the match of tasks to pupils' abilities is good. However, teachers sometimes provide activities and use vocabulary which is too difficult for their pupils. This leads to confusion and slows learning. Where teaching is good or better, teachers make sure pupils are clear about the steps they have to complete to be successful in their learning.
- Teachers use a good range of strategies to gain and maintain pupils' attention. Learning speeds up where pupils are actively involved in tasks, for example, creating a 'bridge' to consider how lessons learned about the Holocaust can be applied to the classroom. Similarly, in their topic about the plague, pupils made great strides in their mathematical understanding of perimeter and area as they calculated the size of 'graves' needed to bury those who had died.
- Recognising that many pupils have a limited vocabulary, staff endeavour to extend this by introducing and emphasising key words in all lessons. Furthermore, questions are used well to encourage pupils to think and reason their answers. Too often, however, in discussions staff accept one-word answers rather than insisting on a phrase or sentence which aids pupils' ideas for writing. Equally, while pupils have good opportunities to write, for example, letters about the injustice of slavery, the use of printed worksheets needing single-word answers limits progress in writing.
- Assessment has improved considerably. The marking of pupils' work has come on significantly and now contributes well to learning. Teachers are skilled at reminding pupils of their behaviour

targets in lessons, but little reference is made to individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and pupils say behaviour has changed for the better in their time at the centre. From having a negative attitude to school, pupils say they now feel settled. Some, for the first time in their schooldays, admit to taking a pride in their work. This is evident in the presentation and completion of their work in books, and the enthusiasm with which they speak about activities such as 'cookie' reading, science and orienteering.
- Pupils are now attending regularly because they enjoy the activities available. Attendance for the last school year was close to 93% despite closures for snow and an outbreak of the winter vomiting bug.
- Pupils speak with satisfaction of the 'kick' they get out of working with pupils in a local primary school as 'reading buddies', commenting how this is improving their interest in reading.
- A consistent approach by staff, and the expectation that pupils will take responsibility for their behaviour, has seen a considerable drop in the number of pupils given fixed-term exclusions. Pupils who are unsettled because they are experiencing a trying time out of school mostly take themselves out of the room to calm down with minimum disruption to learning.
- Pupils acknowledge that bullying such as name-calling does occur, as well as the rare homophobic comment. However, they say this is quickly dealt with by staff, and followed up in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons.
- Pupils respond well to the daily assemblies. They report that in addition to 'making you feel you belong', it helps them to consider moral issues and dilemmas such as 'making the right choice'.
- Pupils have a good awareness of keeping safe, for example, on the road, in the home and when using computers, though some concede they do use social networking sites.

The leadership and management are good

- The head of centre and leadership team are ambitious for the pupils and determined to continue to improve. They have brought about good improvement in a very short time and have dealt sensitively with a number of staffing decisions. The centre was a concern to the local authority, but following the appointment of the head of centre, and expert advice from an executive headteacher and consultants, they recognise how far it has moved. The centre has been well supported by the local authority.
- A revamped staffing structure has been put in place. While new subject leaders have not as yet got a full picture of what is happening in all areas, they have an increasing understanding of what needs to be done to raise attainment in their subjects. A rigorous system has been introduced that allows staff to see at a glance the progress of individuals, of different groups, and to identify quickly gaps in learning.
- Changes to the curriculum have contributed to greater progress and raised attainment. Leaders are conscious of the small number of girls and ensure they have equality of opportunity, for example, in sport and in the topics chosen each half term. A good start has been made on developing the grounds, for example, in horticulture. Staff are aware of pupils who perform particularly well in sport and music but arrangements to foster these talents are informal. As yet, little is offered by way of careers guidance and development of enterprise skills.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and underpins the work of the centre. Though the centre has an almost all White population, pupils gain a good understanding of the diversity of the community around them through the curriculum, and when celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the city. Topics such as slavery and the Holocaust make pupils think deeply about the moral aspect of these events.
- The arrangements to safeguard and protect pupils exceed requirements. Training is up to date.

Links with a range of health, social and welfare agencies contribute to pupils' well-being. Leaders are vigilant in ensuring no pupil or member of staff is discriminated against. The effective use of pupil premium funding for the appointment of an attendance officer, along with rigorous procedures to follow up pupil absence, has contributed to the much-improved attendance figure.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance by the management committee is good. Though the committee has only managed the centre for a few months, it already has an accurate picture of its work. The committee is made up of educationalists, representatives of children's services, and health professionals, all of whom have an in-depth knowledge of the needs of the pupils. As a consequence, it asks taxing questions of the head of centre about teachers' performance and related pay, attendance and behaviour, and the effect this has on pupils' achievement. The committee ensures funds are spent appropriately.

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137497
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	400342

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Brent Fitzpatrick MBE
Head of Centre	Sara Roe
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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