

# Rawtenstall Cribden House Community Special School

Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 6RX

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
| 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.

- Cribden House is a nurturing, warm and friendly school aptly described by a parent governor as 'an oasis of calm'.
- Pupils form trusting relationships with staff which underpin the good and better progress they make.
- Pupils achieve well. They make excellent progress in their communication skills, build self-esteem and learn to work cooperatively.
- Teaching is mostly good and sometimes outstanding. Reading and writing are well taught and progress in English is good.
- Although progress in mathematics is generally good, pupils make better progress in English. The teaching of mathematics is a high priority for development this year.
- Behaviour is generally good. Pupils say they are happy in school and enjoy their lessons.
- They feel safe and know that staff will help them to resolve any difficulties. Parents agree and partnership is good.
- The effective curriculum helps pupils to develop appropriate social and personal skills. Staff support is calm, skilful and consistent, and effectively guides pupils' behaviour.
- The school is well led and senior managers are fully committed to raising pupils' achievement. Systems to check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are good and improving.
- Governors challenge the school well and have a good understanding of pupils' needs and their progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons teachers talk too much, work moves on too slowly or pupils' learning is not improved by the use of technology.
- Teaching teams do not always work together to plan and report on pupils' work in lessons or enable pupils to check their own work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, four shorter periods of teaching and an assembly. All teachers on timetable and two teaching assistants were seen, and all classes were observed. Two shorter periods of teaching were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and discussed their work with them.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, school staff and senior leaders, the school council, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Informal discussions were also held with staff and pupils.
- Information from the school's most recent parental questionnaire was taken into account. Insufficient responses were available on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to be able to access them. Staff views were gathered from discussions and from the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at information about pupils' progress, teaching, planning and monitoring documentation. The school's documents on safeguarding were reviewed, together with records of attendance and pupils' behaviour.

## Inspection team

Linda Clare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Cribden House provides for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils attending the school have statements of special educational needs.
- Many pupils have additional needs including moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs.
- The school caters for pupils between the ages of five and 11. Pupils are able to join the school at any age. There were no pupils in Year 1 at the time of the inspection.
- Almost all, 94%, of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of military personnel); this is significantly above the national average.
- There are 30 boys and four girls in the school and the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- A small number of pupils experience activities in mainstream primary schools. Cribden House currently has inclusion links with St Mary's RC Primary School and Accrington Hyndburn Park Primary School.
- Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher and extended its senior management team. The school has achieved the Eco Schools Award and holds Healthy School status.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
  - reducing the amount of talking that teachers do in lessons so pupils have more opportunity to get on with their work
  - increasing the pace of teaching in some groups, so that pupils do as much work as they do in the best lessons
  - ensuring that when pupils use technology in lessons it links closely to what is being learned in class and extends their understanding of what is being taught.
- Extend school systems that check pupils' work by:
  - ensuring that the new teaching teams plan pupils' work together and use the same ways to record how well pupils have achieved the lesson's goals
  - devising ways in which pupils may inform staff of how well they feel they have understood lessons and have done overall.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- The complexity of pupils' behavioural needs and periods of extended absence contribute significantly to gaps in what they know and can do when they arrive at Cribden House. Some pupils have experienced frequent changes of school or arrive after usual school starting ages. As a result, pupils enter the school with skills that are below those typically expected of pupils their age nationally.
- Although still below national expectation by the end of Key Stage 2, the vast majority quickly make good progress and effectively reduce the difference between their attainments and those achieved by others of their age nationally. A small group of pupils achieve nationally expected levels, which, from where they started, is outstanding progress.
- Pupils make excellent gains in their communication skills. Articulate and polite school council members were impressive ambassadors as they listened well to the considered views of others and explained their roles and responsibilities very clearly.
- Progress is stronger in English than in mathematics because the school has focused on teaching reading over the last three terms. Pupils read well as a result of the very well structured scheme which can be fun – younger pupils showed their delight in jumping onto letters to sound out simple words.
- Reading is valued. Pupils were clearly proud to read their film-trailer notes from whiteboards to one class, while in leading assembly older pupils recounted a recent 'high wires' trip, read prayers and led singing with little support but great confidence and much self-belief.
- Handwriting and spelling schemes have good structure and pupils make good progress in both. The school has identified mathematics as its focus area this year and pupils are already making better gains.
- Pupils achieve well, generally try hard and are keen to improve their work. In a lesson on averages, one pupil very effectively reinforced her learning with an on-line timed test to identify the 'mode' in a series of questions. She deemed her 75% success inadequate and immediately set about improving her score without teacher prompting.
- In response to the school's nurturing support, pupils learn to work more independently, in pairs or collaboratively as part of a group. They become confident in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) and good individual tuition is promoting the use of ipads.
- The use of the pupil premium funding has enabled the school to speed up the process of closing the gap between its pupils' attainments and those of other pupils nationally of a similar age. The good progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is closing the gap in English and mathematics with other groups nationally.
- The individual support and school's close attention to pupil achievement has resulted in very little difference between the progress of girls and boys or between pupils of minority ethnic backgrounds.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is generally good and some outstanding teaching was observed. Teachers expect their pupils to make the best possible progress. Planning is thorough and most is tailored well to meet individual pupil needs.
- The checking of pupils' work is improving and teachers use a good combination of challenge, praise and encouragement. Questioning is used effectively to draw out the most reluctant learners. Literacy is promoted well and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across all subjects.
- Pupils stay on-task well because their behaviour is managed calmly by staff trained to help them

through potentially difficult situations. These are often caused by pupils' frustrations with themselves for making a silly mistake in their work or forgetting to do something.

- Teachers motivate and enthuse pupils through imaginative approaches to learning. In a poetry lesson, pupils enjoyed using similes and described their animal creations as having 'soft furry ears like baby mittens', 'white soft fur like a gentle hug' or 'eyes like shiny green marbles'. In another lesson, traditional Rwandan folklore introduced pupils to rich cultural images and exotic names.
- Occasionally, lessons are so teacher-led that pupils do not have time to finish their work. At other times, lengthy lesson introductions or a slow pace cause attention to drift. In these situations pupils do not make as much progress as they could. The use of technology in lessons is variable; some teachers use it well to complement learning, in other classes it is not clearly linked to the main topic of the lesson.
- Teachers and support staff work together as teaching teams. These teams have recently been expanded and although most work well, closer joint planning and agreed ways to record pupils' progress in lessons would result in a greater consistency of approach in some classrooms.
- Extra help is provided for those who may need a boost to maintain their progress. This help is timely and assessed for its effectiveness. Books are mostly well presented and marked, and pupils generally know what they have to do to improve. However, they have few opportunities to assess how well they have done in lessons or to say how well they have understood their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school is a very caring, supportive community. Good behaviour in lessons supports a positive, purposeful school atmosphere. Parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour is generally good.
- The management of pupil behaviour is consistent, firm and fair, and pupils are quick to say how much they like school and feel safe there as a result.
- Pupils build very good relationships with staff and are confident that they can turn to them for help should it be needed - and that assistance will be rapidly provided. Bullying is infrequent and pupils say it is dealt with promptly if it occurs. Where behaviour is less than expected, it is managed by staff with great skill and minimal loss of learning time.
- Recent improvements to introduce structured and supervised clubs have transformed lunchtimes. As a result, pupils return to lessons having enjoyed their chosen bikes, wii games, board games, gym session or construction kits. Behaviour is calmer and this has improved pupils' learning in the afternoon sessions.
- Pupils listen to one another respectfully, share and take turns. Programmes to strengthen personal, social and emotional skills help pupils to learn how to keep safe. Pupils enjoy ICT and are keenly aware of e-safety which they observe well.
- Circle time and 'volcano in my tummy' sessions provide good opportunity for reflection, to learn about positive approaches to dealing with anger or frustration and to understand that actions have consequences.
- The school's reward systems are very effective. Points are gained across a range of activities and pupils strive to be part of the Friday 'Respect Club' by achieving their personal behaviour targets and respecting others all week.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The school has been energised by the new headteacher and her very capable team of senior managers since the previous inspection. Her high expectations and ambitions for the school to keep improving are shared by senior leaders and governors. Revised systems for checking

teaching, pupils' progress and the management of pupil behaviour are effective and fast becoming established ways of the school. Staff morale is good.

- Performance management for all staff is good and teacher targets are well linked to the school's goals for the future and to pay progression. Staff training focuses well on helping pupils to make greater gains in their work and this has already contributed to improvements, notably for those receiving extra help.
- The school knows its strengths and areas it needs to develop well. Plans are concise and sharply defined. Well thought out steps to make them happen are achievable through a fair sharing of responsibilities.
- The school ensures that pupils make good and better progress in literacy. Progress in numeracy is not quite as good but with closer attention results have improved. The curriculum is good and developing more creatively through topic work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and strengthened by coaching and sporting activities. Trips and visits promote cultural understanding well.
- Daily 'chat books' and parental surveys enhance the school's programme of review and reporting. Plans to enable more area-specific parent meetings to take place are being developed. A small number of pupils successfully join other pupils of their own age in local primary schools. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure their behaviour and safety when attending off-site.
- Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's functioning and pupils have equal access in all that they do – very effectively shown in the good and better progress made by pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding. Discrimination is tackled swiftly to ensure the school's harmonious community is preserved.
- The provision for the very small number of girls in the school is good. Positive action is taken to ensure they are well supported in friendships, and they enjoy, with a number of the boys, the 'Beauty' option of Respect Club.
- The school's relationship with the local authority has been 'light touch' in response to its good overall effectiveness. A very positive partnership has been developed with the school's new senior leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors provide a good level of challenge and support for school leaders. School finances are managed efficiently. Governors check teaching and pupils' progress regularly through school visits, reports and by attending training sessions. They understand pupil premium funding allocation, how well it has improved pupils' progress and the extent to which it has helped to bridge pupils' gaps in learning. Governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

## 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

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 119879     |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Lancashire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 401881     |

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

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Special                        |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community special              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5–11                           |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                          |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 34                             |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body             |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Nick Pilling                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Siobhan Halligan               |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 7 December 2009                |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01706 213048                   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01706 210553                   |
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