

Beechcliffe Special School

Green Head Road, Utley, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD20 6ED

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement has improved since the last inspection. Students now make good progress in all subjects and in their personal development and life skills. Some students are now making outstanding progress. This means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form. They spend an increasing amount of time developing and applying their skills in an adult situation and preparing for the transition to adult life.
- Overall, teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers are highly skilled and provide creative learning opportunities that students really enjoy.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. Learning is rarely affected by disruptive behaviour. Students feel very safe and secure and are very well cared for.
- The headteacher is committed to ensuring that students are taught exceptionally well. The management of teaching is highly effective.
- Leaders and staff share high expectations. Staff are continually encouraged to improve their performance and are very well supported in order to do so. As a result, the quality of education has improved rapidly since the previous inspection.
- The governing body makes a good contribution. Governors have a clear vision and good knowledge of the school's performance, particularly the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching requires improvement. The pace of learning, in some parts of lessons, is not always quick enough for students to learn well, particularly at the beginning of mathematics lessons.
- Students are not always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking or know how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively.
- In mathematics students are not always given enough time to use and apply their skills to solving problems.
- Some subject leaders are not yet fully involved in monitoring students' progress.
- The range of qualifications for students with complex or more profound needs in the sixth form is not yet as wide as it is for students of other abilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons, one jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors held discussions with key staff and the Chair of the Governing Body, as well as holding conversations with the school improvement partner and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the school's procedures for safeguarding and for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They looked at the headteacher's reports to the governing body, the development plan, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers, students' work in books and documents that track students' progress.
- The inspectors spoke with students and took account of 11 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and three questionnaire responses from staff.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Potter, Team inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Most students have moderate, severe, or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some students additionally have either additional communication difficulties, complex medical conditions, challenging behaviour or a sensory impairment.
- Over half of the students are in the sixth form.
- The large majority of students are White British. Most other students are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding, in order to raise achievement even further, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that :
 - the pace of learning in all parts of lessons is always kept up so that students learn quickly, particularly at the beginning of mathematics lessons
 - students always have the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking and other written comments so that they know how to improve their work
 - teaching assistants are always deployed effectively to help students learn
 - students are given more time to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by developing the role of subject leaders so that they can contribute more fully to the monitoring of students' progress.
- Improve the sixth form by widening the range of qualifications available for students with profound or complex needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All students are working at levels lower than expected nationally when they join the school as a result of their disabilities and special educational needs. The vast majority of students make good progress in all subjects. Compared to pupils nationally with similar starting points, many make better than expected progress, even though their attainment is usually still below national expectations when they leave.
- Achievement has improved since the previous inspection. Students' progress has accelerated and they now make good and sometimes outstanding progress, particularly in developing their personal, social and life skills. Pupils with complex needs often make outstanding progress developing their communication skills. More-able students often make outstanding progress in developing their life skills. This progress reflects the particularly good range of opportunities students are given to apply their skills in real-life situations, such as by visiting local shops or learning how to travel independently.
- Students in the sixth form leave the school with a range of qualifications which, although below the national levels of attainment, prepare them well for the next step in their education or training. However, the range of qualifications available for sixth-form students with profound or complex needs, so that their good achievement can be recognised, is not as wide as it is for other students.
- Students make good progress in reading. Provision for reading is well managed and the range of resources and areas designated for students to read in are attractive, so that students are enthusiastic about reading.
- Students make particularly good progress in developing their writing skills because they are given many opportunities to use and apply their skills. In mathematics, however, although progress is good, it is not as good as it is in English. This is because students do not always spend enough time practising using and applying their skills and knowledge to solving mathematical problems.
- All groups of students make equally good progress; for instance, girls do just as well as boys, and students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, learn at the same good rate as other students. This is because of the individual approach to meeting all students' varying and complex needs and this, in turn, ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Students make good progress because teachers are highly skilful in identifying how each student learns best. They carefully adapt the activities to reflect this and make sure that their students know exactly what they need to. Most students are clear about how well they have done and how to improve.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that students make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching since the last inspection has improved; now the majority is good and some is outstanding and, as a result, most students make good progress. A small minority of teaching still requires improvement, however.
- The teaching of communication skills and reading is a strength. Teachers have particularly good subject knowledge. They capitalise on every opportunity for students to consolidate their skills. For example, the daily menu is provided outside the dining room for students to hear if they press a switch, to read in words or symbols, or to see on a photograph.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Students' basic mathematical skills are developed particularly well. However, occasionally in lessons pupils are not given enough opportunities or the time needed to use and apply their skills to complete problem-solving activities, such as by

working in small groups or alongside a teaching assistant.

- Teaching in the sixth form is good because students apply their basic skills in life-skills lessons well, for example when they bake and proudly record the recipes in folders for use when they have left school.
- Where teaching is outstanding, students are fully engaged and active throughout the lesson, thinking really hard or participating in a drama which recreates a story, for example. Students cooperate with each other extremely well, such as when deciding how to construct a buggy powered by an elastic band.
- Teaching assistants often contribute well to students' achievement, offering good support, especially when students are working in smaller groups. However, occasionally they are not always deployed to the best effect in all parts of lessons and so opportunities to promote learning are occasionally missed.
- The quality of marking has improved. Teachers now ensure that students' work is marked and commented upon extensively. This is helping to raise standards and improve achievement. However, not all teachers provide students with the opportunities to respond to written comments, especially so they know what they need to do to improve. This means that opportunities to improve students' skills at a rapid rate are sometimes overlooked.
- Parents agree that students are well taught and are particularly pleased by progress in their personal development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The atmosphere in school is extremely positive, purposeful, warm and extremely caring. At the start of the day, for example, staff skilfully ensure that students feel calm and are ready to learn.
- Students are consistently polite and friendly. They live up to the high expectations that are set for them. They know how important it is that they are successful in everything they do and strive to reach them with determination.
- Students' achievement in their personal development and life skills is central to their school's aims. As students progress through the school they build up an ever-increasing understanding of how to manage their own behaviour, make choices and confidently express their needs and wishes. Behaviour, both in lessons and around school, is almost always impeccable and has been the case over time.
- Students say that bullying is not an issue and parents agree. Students say that there is always someone to turn to if necessary and any problems will be sorted out quickly. Students feel that adults care about them a good deal. For example, they do not feel they need to rush their meal at lunchtime because someone will always wait for them.
- Parents describe the school as 'having a happy atmosphere' and say 'students enjoy school'. This is because relationships between everyone are particularly strong.
- Students learn to keep themselves safe at all times. Students in all age-groups know they must think carefully about what actions they take when using the computer. Students in the sixth form have a keen awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe, such as selecting the safest route when planning a trip to town. They know they must wait and look for traffic before crossing the road when they are out in the community.
- Attendance is broadly average and students, including those with medical needs, attend as often as they can.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a highly effective leader and has been pivotal in the rapid improvement of the school. In conjunction with the clear vision of the governing body she ensures that improving the quality of teaching is a top priority. The headteacher is very ably supported by the senior leadership team. However, much of the responsibility for school improvement rests on their shoulders. This is because the roles of some subject leaders have not yet been fully developed and do not yet make a full contribution to driving school improvement forward.
- The leadership of teaching and performance is highly effective. Procedures to check the quality of teaching are extensive and thorough and enable senior leaders to provide detailed and helpful coaching to support teachers in improving their practice. There is a good link between teachers' performance and their progression along the pay scales.
- The school's system for keeping an eye on how well students are doing is now meticulous. They ensure that any group of students at risk of underachieving is quickly identified and support put in place to ensure that they quickly catch up and do not fall further behind.
- Staff work very well together as a team, sharing their ideas about the best ways to ensure that students achieve as much as they can. Leaders ensure that additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are used to good effect by providing additional opportunities for eligible students. It is clear that the funding is making a positive difference. Inequality is not tolerated.
- The school has an accurate view of its own performance. Improvement plans are very effective because they are linked to training, reviewed carefully and contributed to by everyone. They reflect the clear vision set out by the governing body.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because provision for creative arts is particularly good. Very-well-received productions include everyone who wants to take part.
- The curriculum is good. Programmes of study meet the wide range of learning needs; however, in the sixth form there are not as many externally accredited courses for students with profound learning needs.
- The local authority recognises the rapid progress made by the school. A school improvement partner, who knows the school well, has made a significant contribution to leadership by working with the school in setting priorities for school improvement and evaluating progress towards targets set.
- The large majority of parents who responded would recommend the school to another parent. Partnership with parents is good as a result of good communication between home and school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body contributes well to the leadership of the school because governors seek answers to searching questions. They gain first-hand evidence through the involvement they have with pupils, parents and staff. The Chair of the Governing Body ensures that meetings are effective and meets the needs of the school well. Governors manage the budget effectively and make sure that all safeguarding procedures are rigorous and fully meet requirements. They are clear about how the pupil premium is being spent and can identify the positive effect this is having on eligible pupils. Governors are fully included in information about how well teachers are performing, and know about the quality of teaching and how this links to pay.

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	135229
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	406593

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	94
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Don Andrews
Headteacher	Patricia Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2011
Telephone number	01535 603041
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Email address	business@beechcliffeschool.org

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