

Delius Special School

Barkerend Road, Bradford, BD3 8QX

Inspection dates 18–19 June 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The enthusiasm, knowledge and forward thinking of the headteacher, senior leaders and of the governing body, have seen the school go from strength to strength since the previous inspection.
- Achievement is good. Although learning for many pupils is in small steps, this represents good progress.
- Adults are very imaginative in the way they teach basic reading skills. The daily sessions are a strength of the school and enable pupils to make outstanding progress in this area.
- Teachers use their knowledge of individual pupils well to provide imaginative activities that are enjoyable and which allow pupils to make good progress.
- There has been significant improvement in the way adults assess and record information about pupils' progress.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy being at school and are happy to tackle new experiences. They feel safe among other pupils and staff.
- Pupils are justifiably proud of their 'signing choir'. The choir's performances are of a high quality and uplifting.
- The rigorous way leaders keep a check on all aspects of the school's work is speeding up school improvement, particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to school life. Joint playtimes with young children from the adjoining school are beneficial to children's communication, social and physical development.
- Parents think highly of the school. They appreciate the excellent support they receive and the opportunities provided for them to further their own education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are a few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the use of signs and symbols to aid communication, in the pace of lessons, the effectiveness and use of support staff, and in the way pupils are helped to extend their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Too few links have been established with the adjoining primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 12 different teachers and higher-level teaching assistants. Two were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, looked at the work in their books and their records of achievement.
- Discussions were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body, staff, including senior and middle managers, and representatives of the local authority.
- From discussions and the responses to questionnaires, the inspectors took account of the views of staff.
- As there were very few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), inspectors looked at the views of parents in the school's own recent survey, and of the letters they received.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school'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

John Ashley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with profound and multiple, or severe learning difficulties. Many of the pupils have additional physical and medical needs. In addition, one in five pupils has autism and this proportion is increasing.
- The vast majority of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The few who do not are undergoing statutory assessment.
- Almost one third of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average. Pupil premium funding is intended for the support of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority, or from families in the armed forces.
- Over half the pupils are of Pakistani heritage, a quarter are White British. Of the remainder, a few pupils are of African or Caribbean descent, or of mixed race.
- A team of nurses and therapists work with the school.
- The school is co-located with Lapage Primary School and Bradford Moor Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistency in the quality of teaching and raise it to the highest level by:
 - making sure all adults use signs and symbols consistently to aid the communication of all pupils
 - ensuring lessons are conducted at a pace that maintains pupils' interest
 - increasing the effectiveness and use of some support staff
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practice and improve their mathematical skills, particularly in shape, space and measures, in other subjects.
- Work with the adjoining primary schools to make the best use of resources to enhance the quality of pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress in lessons and over the school year. Adults strive for equality of opportunity and celebrate the diverse population of the school. As a result, there are no significant differences in the achievement of pupils by gender, ethnic group, or by disability or category of special educational needs.
- The pupil premium funding has been used wisely, for example, for additional support staff, and in extending the range of activities available to pupils. As a result, the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the funding is marginally above that of those who do not qualify.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly and make good progress. All pupils make great strides in communication. Those with the most profound needs make choices by pointing with their eyes. Some use signs and symbols to communicate, while others use a picture-exchange system to make their needs understood. A few use electronic devices. All pupils are extending their vocabulary through the 'sign of the week'.
- Most pupils are at a very early stage of learning to read. The less-able pupils show they recognise familiar songs and stories, while the most able read and understand simple texts. Focused daily activities in the recognition of sounds, letters and words have resulted in pupils making outstanding progress in learning to read.
- In mathematics, when working on their daily individual tasks, pupils make good progress in counting and applying this to everyday situations such as counting how many pupils are present. They extend their understanding in other subjects such as food technology by, for example, making picture graphs of their favourite type of sandwich, but their understanding of shape, space and measure is not as advanced because opportunities are missed to develop this.
- A handful of the most-able pupils are achieving particularly well in science, Arabic and design and technology through the lessons they attend in one of the adjoining primary schools. However, leaders recognise that more pupils could benefit from joining in appropriate lessons with their mainstream peers.
- Parents say they are amazed at what their child has achieved. For example, by learning to read, or for those with profound needs commenting, 'He laughs with me.'

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is because of the first-rate training teachers and support staff have received. In addition, the way adults assess and record pupils' achievement is now accurate, and is used effectively to plan the next stage of pupils' learning.
- Lessons are conducted with a sense of urgency, with a variety of activities to maintain pupils' interest. However, on occasion the pace of the lesson is slower and pupils' attention wanders.
- Teachers and higher-level teaching assistants are successful in creating a calm atmosphere conducive to learning. They have a good understanding of how pupils with profound, severe, and complex needs best learn. They use real objects and provide activities that appeal to all the senses. For example, pupils with the most profound needs gurgled with delight as they smelled and felt fresh figs when increasing their awareness of Egypt.
- Pupils' ability to communicate is a priority of the school. Speaking and listening skills are a significant feature in all lessons. Most teachers and support staff use a range of methods to include all pupils in lessons. However, some adults do not use signs and symbols consistently to support learning.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Adults are patient, recognising that some pupils with more profound needs or with autism take a while to understand what is asked of

them. They wait quietly while pupils who find it difficult to vocalise have the necessary time to make a response.

- Teamwork between teachers and support staff is a key feature of most lessons. In addition, skilled higher-level teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' learning. However, despite a wealth of training, a handful of support staff have not been receptive to changes or suggested changes in their practice. This limits their use and effectiveness.
- Teachers plan conscientiously to extend pupils' communication and literacy in all lessons. While some do the same for mathematics, this is not always so. Furthermore, opportunities are missed in lessons and in displays to further pupils' understanding of shape, space and measures.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of the majority of pupils is impeccable. Pupils are cheerful, welcoming and curious about visitors. They demonstrate very good levels of concentration, but on the few occasions where the pace of the lessons slows, they lose interest.
- Pupils with autism and those with complex emotional and behavioural needs respond well to their individual programmes. They gradually learn to manage their behaviour, mix with others and take a full part in all the activities available, including trips out of school.
- Pupils say they are not frightened by anything or anyone in school. There is no evidence of bullying. Work on, for example, relationships education and e-safety, raises pupils' awareness. Parents and staff say they have no concerns for pupils' safety.
- Pupils relish the imaginative lessons. For example, a group pupils with more profound and complex needs squealed with delight as they made their own 'big splash' in the swimming pool prior to returning to the classroom to create a piece of art in the style of David Hockney's 'Big Splash'.
- Pupils responded especially well to opportunities to be excited by their learning. Such was the case as the more-able pupils investigated insects in science, exclaiming with delight as identifying the number of legs on 'a creepy crawly'.
- Parents appreciate the work done with their children to increase their independence, for example, those who are able take responsibility for their toilet and personal hygiene needs, as well as learning to feed themselves.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection because of the systems in place. In addition, because of the high levels of support pupils receive, including nursing care, parents are confident in sending their potentially vulnerable children into school. Where pupils spend long-periods as hospital in-patients, the school keeps close contact and provides programmes suitable to their stage of convalescence.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership and good support from the local authority have helped this school move forward. Rigorous systems have been introduced since the last inspection. A robust method is in place to keep a track of pupils' progress. Following each termly review, teachers are held to account for the progress pupils have made and for any gaps in learning. The outcome of the review contributes to the programme of professional training, as well as challenging targets in teachers' performance review.
- Senior leaders and governors keep equally rigorous checks on all aspects of the school's work. They have tackled the problem of parents taking holidays in school time head on and this has improved pupils' attendance. Following a review of the curriculum, information and communication technology was found to be a weaker area. The resultant training is now paying dividends.

- The curriculum has come on a pace, particularly in the provision for pupils with autism and those who need a more structured approach. Pupils benefit from a personalised programme with daily 'box work' contributing considerably to their progress towards the literacy, numeracy and social targets in their personal plans.
- The topic approach to the humanities, and initiatives such as the 'indoor garden' provide well for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders recognise that work needs to be done to improve the outdoor areas and plans are well advanced for the outdoor provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school is an integral part of the local community providing courses to help residents gain qualifications. Links have been established with both adjoining primary schools. Staff from Delius provide training for both primary schools. A small number of pupils from all three schools benefit from lessons in each other's establishments. However, overall, too few pupils have the opportunity to socialise and be educated alongside their peers.
- Through effective links with a wide range of health and social care agencies, the school is successful in helping pupils and their families overcome barriers to learning that their special educational needs present.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is good. Despite the considerable amount of governors' time being taken to deal with the numerous faults in the new-build, members of the governing body effectively carry out their responsibility to hold the school to account and to ensure that no pupil or member of staff is discriminated against. They are fully aware of the school's areas for development and ask pertinent questions regarding achievement and attendance. Through their links with classes, they know the aspects of teaching that need to be improved and take these into consideration when awarding pay increases. They are meticulous about the health and safety of pupils. As a consequence, the arrangements for safeguarding the pupils exceed requirements. Financial management is good. A careful eye has been kept to ensure that the pupil premium funding has been used to raise achievement. Members of the finance committee and senior leaders have skilfully avoided going into a deficit and ensure the very good use of the pupil premium funding.

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	135235
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	406594

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Birkbeck
Headteacher	Sally Joy
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2011
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