

Beacon Reach

Ward Green Lane, Ribchester, Preston, PR3 3YB

Inspection dates	3–5 June 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils make outstanding progress and, as a result, achieve exceptionally well from their different starting points.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught exceptionally well so that pupils in all classes, including those that are most able, are very well prepared for the next stages of learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs make remarkable progress because they receive highly skilled support that ensures that their needs are very well met.
- Outstanding teaching ensures that the learning is highly effective, though pupils do not always have opportunities to act on the feedback that teachers give them.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in the classrooms, around the school and outside during break times and lunchtime.
- The school ensures that pupils are kept safe and pupils, staff and parents fully agree that they are safe.
- Parents and local authority representatives overwhelmingly pay compliments about the way the school ensures that pupils are very well supported by the caring staff.
- The Principal and leaders have relentlessly pursued improvements in teaching so that progress has been exceptional in English and mathematics over a sustained period. Recent training for teachers in science is ensuring that their skills are quickly catching up and standards in science are rapidly rising.
- The curriculum ensures many opportunities for learning and developing skills in a wide range of subjects, which pupils find interesting and enjoy.
- The Principal's and leaders' (including middle leaders) detailed knowledge of the school's performance comes from frequent classroom monitoring and rigorous checking of information gathered on pupils' learning. In addition, they work exceptionally well together to use this knowledge to make the best decisions that ensure the school continues to improve further.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in six lessons, one observed jointly with the Principal. The inspector also visited a tutorial at the end of a day, and observed pupils moving around the school at break and lunch times.
- Meetings were held with staff and school leaders. One meeting was held with two directors, including the Chair of Directors. Meetings were held with two placing authority representatives, an external consultant appointed by the school, a representative of a training awarding body, a speech, language and communication therapist and an occupational therapist. A telephone conversation was held with a parent.
- The inspector took account of the results of online surveys from pupils and placing authorities, the school's own surveys of placing authority's views and responses from 24 staff questionnaires. There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspector to make a meaningful analysis.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included the school's prospectus, information about pupils' progress, the school's own evaluation of its performance, work in pupils' books; and records relating to the quality of teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Jonathan Woodyatt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Beacon Reach is an independent school which is also registered as a children's home for young people who have a range of complex learning difficulties and require residential provision for up to 52 weeks a year.
- The school is purpose-built and set in large private grounds. It caters for boys and girls aged between nine and 18 years.
- The school aims to meet the needs of pupils who have moderate or severe learning difficulties, and/or are on the autistic spectrum, including those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Tourette Syndrome and Asperger Syndrome.
- There are seven pupils on roll and all have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school was previously inspected in March 2011.
- Since the last inspection there has been a change of leadership in the school. The current Principal joined in January 2013. In addition, up to half the staff have left or joined the school.
- An inspection of the care provision took place at the same time as the education inspection and is reported on separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that teachers do not miss any opportunities to encourage pupils to respond to the feedback given following marking.
- Fully develop teachers' subject knowledge in science in order to secure the highest standards for pupils.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils achieve exceptionally well due to outstanding leadership that ensures the highest standards of teaching and learning take place at the school.
- Pupils start at the school with skills that are low and very low in comparison to what is typical for their age, especially in their communication, language, literacy and personal development. In addition, they have complex learning difficulties and other needs that require them to have close support from an education and care mentor (ECM). A considerable amount of staff time and resources are provided by the school to ensure that these needs are successfully met, which significantly improves the opportunities for pupils to participate and succeed in their learning.
- Pupils make outstanding progress from their different starting points. Records kept by the school show that all pupils have exceeded the levels of progress expected because the teaching is very high quality and the work provided is accurately focused on their individual needs. Although pupils progress well in science, their standards are slightly behind those in other subjects, though catching up quickly as teachers' subject knowledge improves due to training provided by leaders.
- Although attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 is below average due to the complexity of needs, pupils consistently meet and exceed the challenging targets set by the school, and repeatedly demonstrate in their work that they have gained new skills very well.
- Pupils benefit significantly from the school's work to develop their communication skills. As a result, the school can clearly demonstrate improvements in behaviour over time because pupils are choosing and using effective ways to communicate their needs, rather than misbehaving.
- The most able pupils achieve well because they are provided with increasingly challenging work in order to help them progress even further. For example, pupils who demonstrate the skills necessary to achieve awards or qualifications can access programmes of study suited to their skills and abilities. Recently, one pupil successfully gained a GCSE in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress because of the excellent support they receive, which is planned and targeted to meet their needs. All pupils do exceptionally well, reflecting the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity and ensuring that no pupil is discriminated against.
- Pupils join the school at different times in the year and at different stages in their schooling. They typically undertake a period of assessment which can take up to 12 weeks. Following this thorough evaluation of their needs, the pupils are very well placed to join suitable programmes of study. They then go on to participate in classroom activities exceptionally well. As a result, they are very well prepared for the next stages of education or adult life, at a level that is most appropriate for them.

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers match the learning to the needs of pupils exceptionally well in order to for them to make outstanding progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching of communication skills is particularly effective, enabling pupils to learn news ways of expressing their points of view, feelings, ideas and answers. Pupils who spoke to the inspector were confident in expressing their views. Others who struggle with using words are helped to develop their skills in highly unique and effective ways, for example through learning patterns of finger movements using a small touch-screen computer in order to generate a word or sound. The school invests considerably in this as leaders recognise that it

makes a significant contribution to improvement in behaviour and pupils' well-being.

- Effective planning by teachers ensures that all pupils, including those who are most able, are given activities that provide them with challenge and opportunities to practise and develop their skills exceptionally well. For example, during a mathematics discussion, a Year 11 pupil quickly and accurately identified which were scalene, isosceles and equilateral triangles from pictures on the whiteboard.
- Teaching ensures that, in the wide range of subjects taught, pupils can develop skills, knowledge and understanding very well. A Year 8 pupil used repositionable resources to assemble pictures of the uniforms worn by different community services, such as nurses and doctors, while exploring their roles in the community during a geography lesson.
- Teachers and ECMs have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and this ensures a calm and purposeful atmosphere as they work. Their close support ensures pupils' needs are quickly attended to ensuring that disruptions in learning are kept to a minimum. They guide pupils who require the use of the specialist facilities, such as the sensory room, exceptionally well and, as a result, pupils gain invaluable skills to manage their own behaviour.
- Teachers mark work books regularly and thoroughly. As a result, they have a clear understanding of what pupils have or have not understood. However, evidence in some books showed that teachers do not always expect that pupils will re-visit work they have got wrong. On the few occasions that this happens, teachers miss important opportunities to secure even more improvements for pupils.
- Teachers' knowledge of English and mathematics is very well developed so that pupils can make the best improvements in their knowledge and skills that are appropriate to their needs. However, teachers' subject knowledge in science lags slightly behind that in other subjects, though it is quickly catching up, as evidenced in school records and pupils' work, due to the support and training provided by leaders.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils make exceptional efforts to maintain high levels of behaviour in the classrooms, around the school and outside in the school grounds. They demonstrate a great willingness to have previously unknown visitors attend their classrooms. They discuss well with each other while learning and cooperate well during shared activities, such as outdoor games.
- Behaviour records, kept by the school, clearly indicate a dramatic reduction over time in the number of incidents of misbehaviour. Levels are currently considerably lower than before because pupils are being taught how to communicate their views well and to put in place ways to manage their own behaviour successfully, such as self-referral to the sensory room. As a result, this has led to much less need for staff to intervene and much more time for pupils to focus on learning. Also, there are no incidents of fixed term or permanent exclusions recorded.
- Incidents of bullying are rare. If they do occur, the school investigates these rigorously and responds appropriately to any issues that have arisen. In conversation with the Principal, and in the schools records, it was clear that parents are kept fully informed of any incidents. Parents agree that the school places great emphasis on maintaining the exceptional support that they provide.
- Pupils rarely miss a day. This is reflected in the above-average attendance which improves each year.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and are confident of the support of staff, especially the ECMs, when they have problems. In conversation with the inspector, one parent was remarkably complimentary about the way that staff respond to their child's needs and provide a warm and caring environment. This view is reinforced by information gathered in school surveys and conversations with placing authorities and staff.

Leadership and management**Outstanding**

- The Principal sets an outstanding example to staff and pupils through his high-quality interactions, excellent knowledge of pupils' needs and outstanding leadership skills. He is continually raising the standards of achievement by improving the standards of teaching.
- Leaders, including directors and middle leaders, work very well together and this team is instrumental in ensuring that the best decisions are made, as evidenced by improving standards in the school.
- Leaders use the wide range of information that they gather in order to accurately measure their own performance and secure the best improvements for pupils' learning. They spend time in the classrooms to see for themselves how well learning is taking place. As a result, they make detailed plans and have a track record of making successful improvements.
- Leaders expect the highest standards from teachers and the arrangements they have in place for checking staff performance are securing this. They link pay to clear targets in order to secure improvements and tackle underperformance. They have recently increased the high-quality extra support, provided through links with external consultants, for staff to further develop their skills in teaching science.
- The organisation of the school day is highly effective for pupils because it links the classroom-based learning activities with the opportunities to secure improvements in managing their individual needs. For example, close support from ECMs, access to resource rooms and assistance from the speech therapist and the occupational therapist contribute significantly to the exceptional support for pupils.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects and benefit considerably from opportunities to develop their skills in and out of the classroom. Topics in their religious education programme encourage pupils to explore different cultures and faiths while tutorial time allows them to reflect on their place in the school and society well. Trips such as those to a local college and activities, such as caring for the Alpacas in the small farm on site, also help enrich pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Representatives from a placing authority commented very favourably on the improvements made by young people they had placed at the school. This was similar to the parent's comments. Surveys, including those carried out by the school, of staff, pupils and placing authorities similarly reflect these positive responses.
- The leaders have ensured that safeguarding meets requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	136072
Social Care unique reference number	SC402658
Inspection number	446251
DfE registration number	888/6057

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Beacon Reach Limited
Chair	Dianne Abbott
Headteacher	Paul Carolan
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,350
Telephone number	01254 878520
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	paul.carolan@beaconreach.co.uk

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