

Ellar Carr

Ellar Carr Road, Thackley, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD10 0TD

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is driving improvement firmly throughout the school. Many positive changes have been brought about since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and support staff work hard to help pupils overcome difficulties, recognising where individuals do not understand the work and reshaping their teaching to accommodate pupils' needs.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils make rapid progress from their starting points to develop their knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils in the newly established key stage 4 leave the school in a strong position to take their next steps due to good teaching and effective careers information and guidance.
- The school staff are highly supportive and caring. Excellent relationships and a friendly and respectful culture infuse the school.
- Pupils are very positive about their school and the support that staff offer them. They make significant gains in their personal and social development.
- The work of the school to support pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Staff skilfully manage behaviour so that there is a purposeful learning environment.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and considerate. They work well with each other and people in the community. They are articulate and curious about what is taking place around them.
- All leaders, governors and staff ensure a strong culture of safeguarding.
- Governors on the new management committee provide the school with appropriate challenge and support, but recruitment difficulties are starting to constrain their work.
- Most teachers are additionally leaders of subjects, but are not held to account for this aspect of their performance by governors.
- Children who are in the care of the local authority are supported through frequent reviews of their progress, but reporting is sometimes not as precise as it needs to be.
- Systems to measure and track pupils' progress are not established in all subjects.
- The curriculum in subjects at key stage 3 is not as demanding or as challenging as that in English or mathematics.
- Although standards are rising, opportunities for pupils to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are not planned well enough to promote outstanding progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - increasing the capacity of governors on the management committee to challenge and support leaders
 - strengthening performance management systems to ensure that all subject leaders are held accountable for their work
 - developing progressive and challenging key stage 3 schemes of work
 - making sure that the academic achievements of children in care are precisely reported in the regular reviews of their progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise pupils' achievement in each subject and quicken progress by:
 - ensuring that all pupils have increasingly demanding and challenging work to deepen their learning in all curriculum subjects at key stage 3
 - extending assessment systems to include all subjects
 - making sure that opportunities to develop and refine literacy skills, and numeracy skills where appropriate, are thoroughly embedded in all areas of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher continues to lead the school effectively. The management committee, staff and pupils share her vision for the school, and the local authority is confident in her good leadership. Under her leadership, the school has almost doubled in size and provision has expanded from key stage 3 to include key stage 4. These changes have been implemented smoothly and effectively.
- School leaders and staff promote pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Decisions to expand the 'community programme' have led to better opportunities for pupils to learn about fundamental British values through working alongside other people of different ages, beliefs and faiths.
- Leaders support staff well in managing behaviour, and school procedures and policies are applied consistently. As a result, behaviour has improved quickly as new pupils adapt to the school's high expectations.
- New assessment procedures, introduced in the last school year, are enabling leaders to keep a close check on the progress of individual pupils in key subjects. However, information from school systems is not used well enough to check the progress of groups of pupils or their achievement in every subject.
- Senior leaders understand what the school needs to do to improve. Reviews of teaching are beginning to focus more firmly on the impact teaching has on pupils' learning. Close attention is paid to pupils' views and to scrutiny of their work.
- Training and support is used well by leaders to challenge staff and improve the quality of teaching. Leaders have ensured that staff are well prepared to teach reading, writing and mathematics and to take on new areas of work such as the introduction of key stage 4 courses.
- Regular checks on the quality of teaching inform decisions about teachers' performance. Teachers are held to account for their roles as classroom teachers, but insufficient attention is given to their leadership responsibilities. The headteacher recognises this deficiency in the current system.
- The management committee ensures that additional funding such as pupil premium is used effectively and for the purposes planned.
- The new key stage 4 curriculum has been kept under close review and has led to modifications of courses. Changes to some key stage 3 schemes of work are less advanced. Programmes of work and assessment in a few subjects require closer attention to ensure that pupils make swift progress to the new and challenging key stage 4 courses.

Governance of the school

- Governors on the management committee are keen to ensure that pupils achieve the best they can. Although limited in size and capacity, the committee is using the collective skills of its members well to monitor the work of the school.
- Governors have ensured that systems and procedures to keep pupils safe and to

manage challenging behaviour safely are implemented effectively.

- The performance of staff, including the headteacher, is reviewed and overseen by governors.
- Governors scrutinise the information they are given and regularly question the headteacher about pupils' rates of progress. They recognise a need to extend current assessment and tracking systems in the school to gain a complete picture of how well pupils are learning.
- Governors are working purposefully with the headteacher to overcome current recruitment difficulties with the aim of increasing the committee's capacity and gaining a wider range of expertise to draw upon.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding is a priority. All staff play their part in keeping pupils safe and in ensuring that all pupils, including the growing number of older pupils, are managed safely.
- Appropriate vetting systems ensure that checks on the suitability of staff, governors, regular volunteers or contractors are thorough and up to date. Well-maintained systems and policies guide the school's work and are consistently applied.
- The knowledge and skills of staff are kept up to date through regular training in aspects of safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. The training has alerted staff to the risks of extremism and radicalisation so that action to keep pupils safe and secure can be taken quickly and effectively.
- Relationships with health, social care and other external agencies are strong. The headteacher ensures that swift action is taken to address any concerns and seeks early help to support vulnerable families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and use of assessment is good. Teachers' planning is generally well structured, especially at key stage 4. Teachers' subject knowledge and skills in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics have improved since the previous inspection and they have high expectations of pupils.
- Mathematics lessons are purposeful and teachers use the information from previous assessments to plan work that challenges pupils and interests them. Staff are particularly skilled at recognising gaps in pupils' previous learning and adjusting teaching to help them understand concepts and learn number facts. Pupils enjoy the subject and know what is expected of them. They work industriously, and sometimes in silence, when absorbed in particularly tricky tasks that have engaged their interest. However, teachers rarely promote numeracy skills in other subjects to reinforce pupils' learning.
- Classes are well organised and transitions from one activity to another are smooth and managed so that little time is lost between reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, teachers have made changes to the way in which

reading and writing are taught. Staff know what pupils can do and what is typical for their age. This helps them to map out a suitable programme of work that builds pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills while giving them confidence in their learning. However, teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on literacy when setting and assessing work in other subjects across the curriculum.

- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing well, particularly in Years 10 and 11. They readily participate and give their views in discussions and debates. They ask questions and display enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are being well prepared for examinations. For example, pupils quickly capture key points in their notes, a skill that aids their learning in other subjects such as science and their study skills generally.
- Pupils are responding positively to changes made to the teaching of science. A greater emphasis on practical work and experiments has helped to quicken pupils' progress. Almost all pupils have achieved their targets over the year and many pupils have exceeded them.
- The school's marking policy is implemented fully. Assessment and feedback to pupils is very strong. In mathematics, for example, feedback is developmental, acknowledging where gains have been made and concepts understood. Pupils' self-esteem and pride in their work are growing in response to this consistent approach.
- Occasionally, pupils' learning slows in Years 7 and 8. Afternoon activities in subjects such as food technology, art and humanities are not quite as sharply focused and the pace starts to relax. Tasks and activities do not deepen and extend pupils' knowledge or skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Teachers, support assistants and behaviour support workers are skilled in enabling pupils to understand their emotions and in teaching them strategies to handle them. Increasingly, pupils are able to control their individual conditions rather than be controlled by them.
- Pupils are fulsome in their praise for the school and the difference it has made to them. One pupil said, 'I feel changed beyond all recognition', and many others endorse that view, sharply contrasting their former selves with now, for example: 'I'm reading and entering examinations I never thought I would. I was wild and hated school.'
- Pupils quickly settle to the warm and welcoming environment and supportive structure the school provides. Individual pupils are met and greeted by name on arrival, and the day begins with a review of the papers over breakfast or a board game with pupils and staff.
- Pupils learn social skills because they are modelled well by staff. Opportunities to develop and practise new skills in different settings, to accept responsibilities and to put the school's ethos and aims into practice by helping and supporting others are carefully nurtured in a well-organised community programme.

- Around three quarters of pupils take part as reading buddies in nearby primary schools or by helping the elderly in a residential home. Pupils are proud of their work to help others. Consequently, their confidence, ability to talk to different people and willingness to 'have a go' and get involved are having a positive impact on their own learning and personal development. Pupils are building friendships with others of their own age and enjoy working and playing together.
- Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe is comprehensive and well developed through regular teaching. For example, pupils know how to stay safe online and who to report concerns to. They know there is zero tolerance for bullying at this school, and incidents happen rarely and any issues are quickly resolved. The school's work with national and local organisations helps to raise pupils' awareness of human rights and to understand why homophobic and racist bullying is wrong.
- Pupils feel safe at school. All have someone to talk to if they have a problem and they are confident they will be helped.
- Pupils' awareness of the world of work, and careers information, advice and guidance begins early in Year 7. Younger pupils begin to think about what they want to do and have undertaken their own research of careers. Formal interviews and individual support help older pupils to prepare for their next steps and to successfully sustain their courses.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Behaviour is consistently managed well with strong systems in place to manage any poor behaviour. For example, even if a pupil has a poor start to the day, the school's systems and good relationships with staff enable them to adapt and behave well for the rest of the day. Pupils understand and really care about the consequences of behaviour. Pupils, particularly when they first arrive at the school, can present challenging behaviour, but they quickly improve with the support of designated behaviour support workers.
- Staff are good at praising and rewarding pupils who 'do the right thing'. Praise is given where it is deserved and staff do not undermine the standards they set by giving it lightly.
- The school is calm and provides a well-ordered and encouraging environment for learning. Pupils are developing very positive attitudes to learning. The vast majority are confident, articulate and polite to each other. They listen and converse well, asking questions and showing interest and curiosity in what is going on around them.
- The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is first rate. The atmosphere at lunchtime in the school diner is excellent as pupils and staff eat together as a pleasant social occasion. This contributes much to the smooth transitions between lunch, play and lessons that are a feature of the school's work.
- Pupils are increasingly meeting their behaviour and attendance targets, and are proud of the progress this represents for them since joining the school. Behavioural incidents have fallen significantly in number since the previous inspection. Weekly case conferences of staff who work with each child take place to ensure that all that can be done is done to help individual pupils be successful.

- Attendance is improving rapidly and is close to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's assessment information and the work in pupils' books and folders show that, throughout the school, pupils make good progress from their starting points to develop basic skills.
- Pupils get off to a good start in reading and writing in response to a consistent focus on these essential skills. Those who arrive unable to read, or at very early stages of reading, are supported well. Pupils quickly learn to match sounds and words and use these skills to support them in decoding unfamiliar words.
- Regular daily reading to adults and consistent practice helps all pupils, including most-able pupils, to quickly acquire the skills and confidence to develop their reading. Many pupils look forward to these short sessions and are proud to master tricky words and lengthy books.
- Pupils' skills in writing, and in using grammar, spelling and punctuation, are developing strongly through consistent teaching. Responses to the headteacher's weekly 'POW challenge', in which all pupils produce an extended piece of writing from a starting point she provides, demonstrate good and progressive improvement in their skills over time.
- The development of literacy skills by applying them in written work in other subjects is limited. Pupils are sometimes capable of producing a better standard of work and more extended responses than they are asked for.
- The school's data shows that pupils initially make slow progress in mathematics in Years 7 and 8. Nonetheless, they continue to make gains in their learning to develop their understanding of concepts and knowledge of number facts. Progress gathers pace the longer pupils are at the school and they make good progress in key stage 4.
- There are no marked differences between the progress of boys and that of the small number of girls on roll, who achieve well. All have equal opportunities to study academic and vocational subjects and participate in community activities and clubs.
- In all classes and key stages, disadvantaged pupils are achieving their targets in English and mathematics quickly so that differences in performance between them and pupils nationally are diminishing. This is because the school is putting individual support in place to help them overcome barriers to their learning.
- The large number of children who are in the care of the local authority are readily engaging in their individual programmes. Although regular reviews of their work take place, leaders do not report on their learning precisely enough to be confident that all are making good progress in targeted areas.
- The very few pupils who are the most able also make good progress. They are encouraged to tackle harder work that challenges them and respond willingly to it.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a wide range of academic and vocational courses to choose from. These pupils are making good progress in their courses and in developing the skills they need for independent study. All pupils who have continued on to college courses and training have sustained their placements. This is because care is taken to

ensure that the placements match the pupils' interests and career aspirations.

- In a very recent development, pupils now have opportunities to study external courses in Year 9 and enter examinations early in Year 10. This development and its impact on pupils' progress have yet to be evaluated by the school.

School details

Unique reference number	137497
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10026160

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Janet Inglis
Headteacher	Sara Roe
Telephone number	01274 619504
Website	www.ellarcarr.co.uk
Email address	office@ellarcarr.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupils' outcomes and the curriculum on its website.
- Ellar Carr educates pupils who have identified social, emotional and mental health needs. Many have associated learning difficulties. Almost all pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. A small number are undergoing assessment for an EHC plan.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils at Ellar Carr has increased significantly. Two years ago, the local authority expanded the provision from one which served pupils aged 11–14 to become an 11–16 pupil referral unit.
- The school's aim is to prepare pupils for a successful transition to further education or training at the age of 16. Most pupils join the school in Year 7 or during Year 9.
- The school serves a wide geographical area of Bradford and the surrounding area.

- Around 20% of the pupils currently on roll are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around the school at breaks and lunchtimes. Inspectors also observed arrangements as pupils arrived at the start of the day and as they left for home.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff. Meetings were also held with the chair of the management committee and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils both formally and informally to discuss their experiences of the school.
- The inspectors considered the views of 23 members of staff who responded to their online survey.
- Too few parents responded to the online survey, Parent View, to take account of their views in preparation for the inspection or during it. Inspectors took account of the views parents expressed in the school's own recent survey.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including: those relating to children in care; case studies and pupils' plans; pupils' progress information; governors' records of meetings; school improvement planning the curriculum and pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors also examined arrangements for safeguarding, checked procedures and scrutinised records relating to keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Gina White, lead inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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