

# Inspection of a good school: Beechcliffe Special School

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

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 July 2022

## Outcome

Beechcliffe Special School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders ensure that Beechcliffe School is a place for 'safe, joyful learning'. Across school sites, all pupils learn an appropriate curriculum relevant to their needs. Pupils are taught by well-trained teachers. They care about pupils' academic progress and meeting their individual special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Staff have ambition for pupils. They are skilled at supporting pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans. The school is well-resourced with a range of specialist facilities and sensory interventions to support pupils. Pupils have access to the large 'hydro pool' and 'physiotherapy suite'. Other facilities include the 'sensory integration suite' with a therapeutic swing and a medical room for on-site paediatric consultations. Post-16 students have a dedicated learning area with smaller college type classrooms. Students can use the 'independent living area' to prepare them for adulthood by learning housekeeping skills.

Across school sites, leaders have ensured relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the provision. Staff know pupils well and pupils feel supported. Pupils learn how to look after their mental health and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say bullying happens, but it is rare. They know staff are there to help them to resolve issues, should they occur.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriate curriculum adapted to meet the needs of all pupils' SEND across both school sites. The curriculum is ambitious and follows the national curriculum. It is well planned and sequenced. Pupils who need support to develop their reading are taught phonics by trained teachers in dedicated lessons. Staff teach reading with enthusiasm and pupils engage well. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of their subjects and present subject matter clearly. Teachers adapt their approaches to meet the needs of pupils' SEND; for example, keeping instructions precise when checking pupils' progress. Classroom environments focus on pupils, and staff use

resources sensibly. Many classrooms have hoists to ensure non-ambulant pupils can access learning in different areas of the school.

Pupils' work matches the planned curriculum. Pupils read in lessons and can talk about what they have read. Pupils speak well. They can demonstrate comprehension appropriate to their stage of learning and SEND. Pupils are prepared for next steps, including post-16 and post-19, using the skills and knowledge learned in lessons. Pupils can describe what they have been learning and how they are supported, sometimes one to one. They can describe revisiting learning and aspects of the curriculum that support other lessons, including reading and spelling.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils' broader development. It demonstrates ambition for all pupils towards the world of work, adulthood and next steps for younger pupils. The school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education is of a high quality. Pupils can describe lessons that include aspects of fundamental British values. They can detail learning about the history of the country and how parts of it developed over time. Pupils talk about how the school develops their interests and talents. This has led to some pupils performing in front of people or being encouraged to develop talents such as swimming and football outside of school. Some personal development activities have been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but leaders are getting back on track. Already pupils have been on residential trips and the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award is running.

Post-16 students experience a curriculum that leads to qualifications and supports the development of personal, social and employability skills. The school employs a member of staff to support pupils' careers education, information, advice and guidance. The school measures itself against the Gatsby benchmarks. Support for pupils and students into adulthood and the world of work develops as pupils grow older. Pupils have transition plans that include practical experiences of college and the world of work through work experience. All pupils transition to positive destinations post-16 or post-19.

Most pupils are happy in school. Some pupils spoke about how they have learned to manage their behaviour since joining the school. At Beechcliffe Thackley, pupils told inspectors they too often hear derogatory language, but they know staff are quick to support them. Pupils describe school staff as supportive. Leaders have invested in staff to engage and support pupils back to school. This work is new and shows some impact. Absence at Beechcliffe Thackley is too high, however. Leaders are working to improve attendance but not all families engage with this work.

Staff speak highly of the support offered by school leaders to manage their workload. They say leaders are interested in their views to improve the school and provision for pupils. Staff say leaders are approachable and have an open-door policy. Governance is robust. Governors are realistic about the pace of school improvements and want the best for pupils.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders have ensured safeguarding is prioritised among staff. They have developed systems to ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across school sites. Procedures to check adults before their employment are comprehensive. Members of staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to report concerns. All staff receive regular safeguarding updates to ensure that they understand the risks pupils face in the community. Leaders ensure that staff have received training on preventing radicalisation and child criminal exploitation.

Pupils that spoke to inspectors say that they feel safe and happy in school.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not attend Beechcliffe Thackley regularly. As a result, they are missing time in school and developing gaps in their education. Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' attendance demonstrates some impact, but some families are not responding to the school's work to improve attendance. Leaders need to embed the new attendance and engagement strategy to work with parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Some pupils use derogatory language at Beechcliffe Thackley. Pupils hear negative language too often. Though staff intervene, leaders should eradicate any instances of derogatory language by ensuring staff are proactive in educating pupils about the impact of such language.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 8 and 9 May 2013.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135229
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199703
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	241
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	54
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Heather Bell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lee Harris
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.beechcliffeschool.org">www.beechcliffeschool.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 April 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Beechcliffe School is a special school for pupils aged between 11 and 19 years. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan. Some pupils attend the school during assessment for an EHC plan.
- The school is split across two sites. These are Beechcliffe Keighley and Beechcliffe Thackley.
- Beechcliffe Keighley is located on the same site as Carlton Keighley Academy.
- The school makes provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairments, physical disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and SEMH needs.
- The school uses Keighley College and OnTrak Community Initiative to provide alternative provision placements.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, heads of school, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers and some non-teaching staff.
- The lead inspector visited each of the school sites: Beechcliffe Keighley and Beechcliffe Thackley.
- The lead inspector met with members of the school's local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and history. Here, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with each school's designated safeguarding leaders. The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The inspector also reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school sites, as well as activities at the start of the day.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with representatives from two alternative provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, including pupils who receive support to improve their behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils, and the online Parent View survey for parents.

## Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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