

Inspection of an outstanding school: Rawtenstall Cribden House Community Special School

Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6RX

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 June 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created a calm environment in the school that enables pupils to flourish. Pupils are happy coming to school. Parents told the inspectors that the school has transformed their lives.

Leaders' attention to pupils' emotional needs underpins everything that they do. Pupils benefit from strong, caring and patient relationships with staff who know them well. Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Leaders skilfully bring pupils to the point where they are ready to learn and expect them to do their best. Over time, pupils' self-esteem increases. They believe in themselves. However, leaders have not designed a suitably ambitious and broad curriculum that covers all subjects. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should across a range of subjects.

Leaders have the highest expectations of behaviour for all pupils. Pupils rise to these expectations. Leaders are quick to respond to and deal with friendship and bullying issues. Pupils know that they can turn to a trusted adult if they are worried about something.

Pupils benefit from different opportunities to practise their social and communication skills. At lunchtime, they engage in social games with their peers. They enjoy building campfires in the woodland area. Pupils are offered roles of responsibility such as the 'A Team' or school councillors. They enjoy contributing to decision-making in school. Many pupils take part in singing club and perform for their classmates. Children in the early years make effective use of the playground equipment to develop their gross-motor skills.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that helps pupils to communicate well and gain mathematical knowledge. They have considered what they want pupils to learn and identified when this content will be taught. In some subjects, teachers break down learning into small manageable steps. They choose appropriate resources and activities that are adapted to suit the needs of the pupils. Teachers typically use assessment methods effectively to check on what pupils have understood and remembered. In these subjects, pupils learn the curriculum successfully.

In the early years, leaders have responded to children's very differing needs. They have designed an ambitious and coherent curriculum that prepares children well for key stage 1. However, this is not the case in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders do not offer a broad enough range of subjects even when this is appropriate for some pupils. In addition, leaders have not thought carefully about the key knowledge that pupils should acquire across all subject areas. As a result, some pupils do not learn all that they should or could. Some pupils miss out on key learning. This hampers their readiness for the next steps in their education.

Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a range of books to read for pleasure. Teachers read to pupils every day. Pupils share teachers' enthusiasm for reading. The teaching of phonics and communication begins right from the start of the Reception class. Staff are experts in the delivery of the phonics programme. They adapt the activities effectively. Pupils who are non-verbal learn to read using symbols. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they have learned. Staff offer suitable support to those who need help to catch up. Most pupils learn to read well. This enables them to be able to access other areas of the curriculum.

Staff are skilled in helping pupils to regulate their behaviour so that learning is not disrupted. Staff seek to understand the triggers and causes of behaviour. Staff work closely with pupils to help them understand and regulate their behaviour. Consequently, the behaviour displayed by many pupils has improved dramatically since attending this school. In the Reception class, staff model clear routines. These help the children to behave well. For example, at snack time, children waited patiently for their piece of fruit. They respond politely to staff.

Pupils have access to a range of wider opportunities. For instance, leaders aim to raise pupils' aspirations for the future through a 'world of work' programme. Through this, pupils learn about a range of careers. Pupils learn about diversity and to respect others who are different from themselves. They visit different places of worship.

Leaders respond well to pupils' additional needs. The education, health and care (EHC) plans and provision plans are used effectively to help to tailor learning for each pupil. Leaders ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to be able to respond to pupils' needs. Leaders work collaboratively with outside agencies.

The governors know the school well. They use their expertise to develop the quality of education that leaders provide. Leaders consider staff's well-being and workload. Staff

commented on the positive work-life balance that they enjoy. They told inspectors that they feel valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have secure and robust safeguarding procedures in place. Staff know the safeguarding processes. They follow these diligently. Leaders ensure that staff are trained to be able to identify potential signs of abuse and neglect.

Staff are aware of the additional safeguarding vulnerabilities of the pupils. They use the personal, social and health education curriculum effectively to help pupils learn how to keep safe. For example, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. Leaders work collaboratively with external agencies. They ensure that pupils and their families receive the help that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are not ambitious enough for pupils to learn a broad curriculum. There are a small number of subjects where leaders have not considered the content and the order in which it should be taught. Pupils are missing out on important learning. They are not being adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders should broaden the curriculum. They should carefully consider the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn in these subjects.

Background

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2017.

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.

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

Unique reference number	119879
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10241728
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nick Pilling
Headteacher	Siobhan Halligan
Website	www.cribdenhouse.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- All pupils at the school have an EHC plan. The school caters for social, emotional and mental health, language and communication difficulties and autism spectrum disorder.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders and other staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and the school's school improvement partner.

- The inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding. They also checked the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the 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 inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school, bullying and behaviour. They also observed behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors reviewed documentation, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, leaders' self-evaluation and school development plans.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text responses.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Amina Modan

His Majesty's Inspector

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