

Inspection of an outstanding school: Broadfield Specialist School

Coal Clough Lane, Burnley BB11 5BT

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

Outcome

Broadfield Specialist School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. They are extremely polite and well-mannered. Pupils benefit from the high-quality care and support that they receive from the staff, who know them well. They told inspectors that they appreciate the difference that this school has made to their lives. Pupils are happy to attend the school.

Pupils respond superbly to the very high expectations that the school has for their achievement. Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well. Students in the sixth form benefit from a curriculum that is tailored skilfully to their individual needs. This allows them to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

Pupils relish the opportunities that they have to develop their talents and interests. These include participating in the school musical, hair and beauty sessions, the choir and book club. The school ensures that pupils have access to a rich set of experiences. For example, pupils enjoyed visits to the zoo, a local airport and museums. This helps pupils to develop a wider understanding of the world.

The school provides pupils with the tools that they need to succeed in life. It carefully ensures that pupils receive the support that they need to engage fully with the broad curriculum and the impressive range of additional opportunities that are on offer. Pupils become resilient and independent young people.

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

Governors have an accurate and detailed appreciation of the performance of the school. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders at all levels to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. Governors have established an environment where everyone is welcomed and valued.

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum. It has thought carefully about the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. Pupils study a broad range of subjects in each key stage. The curriculum prepares them extremely well for each phase of their education. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, gain a wide variety of qualifications that set them up well for further education, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Staff have an intricate understanding of the curriculums that they teach. They make regular checks on what pupils know, remember and can do. Staff use this information expertly to support pupils to address any gaps or misconceptions in their learning. This means that pupils gain a deep body of subject knowledge and achieve remarkably well.

Staff are highly skilled at identifying and supporting pupils' additional needs. They draw extensively on the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to design engaging and appropriate activities. This helps pupils to build their knowledge and skills securely over time.

The school prioritises the development of pupils' reading, language and communication skills. Pupils with communication needs receive focused support. This includes the use of sign language, visual aids and modern technology. As a result, pupils learn how to articulate their thoughts and feelings to others. Their sense of humour shines through as their ability to communicate improves.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive the help that they need to develop their phonics knowledge. They read from books that match the sounds that they already know. This helps pupils to become fluent readers.

Pupils are committed to their learning and have highly positive attitudes towards their education. The school has a deep understanding of the needs of each pupil. This enables it to provide highly effective support to any pupils that need help to improve their attendance and manage their own behaviour successfully. Students in the sixth form are proud to be ambassadors for their school.

The school prioritises pupils' personal, social and emotional development. It provides them with an array of powerful experiences that help them to develop the self-belief that they need to tackle new challenges. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They know how to stay safe online. Staff take great care to ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and how their bodies change as they grow. Pupils access a comprehensive programme of careers education and work experience placements. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for adulthood.

The school prioritises the well-being of staff, who benefit from a comprehensive programme of training. Staff carry out their roles with expertise. They welcome the detailed information that they receive about the curriculum. This helps them to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2015.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	119883
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10321381
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Charlotte Scheffmann
Headteacher	Angela Wade
Website	www.broadfield.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils at the school have an EHC plan.
- The school provides for pupils with a broad range of special educational needs and/or disabilities including complex needs. These include autistic spectrum disorders, specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, social emotional and mental health needs and speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils have severe learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairments or physical disabilities.
- The school makes use of one registered and three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time inspection judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading and communication, English and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke to the local authority school safeguarding officer and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, the curriculum, assessment, pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- An inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Ruddy

Ofsted Inspector

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