



Tor View School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119891
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280681
Inspection dates 12 December 2005 to 13 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Alastair Younger

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Clod Lane
School category	Community		Haslingden
Age range of pupils	4 to 19		Rosendale, Lancashire BB4 6LR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 214640
Number on roll	111	Fax number	01706 215797
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Malcolm Sollitt
Date of previous inspection	1 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr A J Squire

Age group 4 to 19	Inspection dates 12 December 2005 - 13 December 2005	Inspection number 280681
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a special school for pupils with moderate, severe, profound or complex learning difficulties. A few also have physical disability and sensory impairment. Six pupils have severe autism and challenging behaviour. They are taught in the Intensive Support Centre (ISC). Boys outnumber girls about 2:1. Most pupils are white British but there is a small proportion with a Bangladeshi or Pakistani background. About a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry is very low. There are three children in the Foundation Stage and 29 in the Further Education base. The school day is extended through after-school and weekend activities. Weekend and holiday activities are open to all families in the area who have a child with special educational needs. The school has achieved a Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school giving excellent value for money. It evaluates itself as good, reflecting its lofty ambitions and desire to keep building on the many improvements made since the previous inspection. In no area is the school less than good and in most it is exceptional. Most importantly it opens up pupils' lives through vastly improving their communication, personal and social skills and offering them a wonderful range of learning experiences. The pupils are fantastic. They love the school and work extremely hard. Parents are thrilled with the excellent progress their children make and the outstanding care and support they receive. Teaching in Further Education and the Intensive Support Centre is frequently outstanding, resulting in pupils and students making exceptional progress. In other classes, including the Foundation Stage, it is usually good, leading to pupils achieving well. The main difference between good and outstanding teaching is teachers' use of lesson time. The school provides an exceptional range of high quality opportunities for pupils to be taught in mainstream settings. An outstandingly successful range of activities extends each school day. Opening up weekend and holiday activities to all families in the area who have a child with special educational needs makes a massive contribution to the community. Underpinning all this is an outstanding leadership team who share vision and commitment to improvement in abundance. With impeccably managed finances and a hugely successful record of raising extra funding the school is exceptionally well placed to keep building on its success.

not applicable

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school's self evaluation is accurate in judging that the Further Education department is outstanding. Exceptional leadership and management have a tremendous impact on the ethos of the department and its excellent curriculum. Work related learning is a particular strength. It leads to huge success in enterprise projects, work placements and college courses and prepares students spectacularly well for leaving school with greatly enhanced prospects of economic well-being.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- Improving teaching and learning in some lessons by ensuring that starter and reinforcement activities do not take too much time away from new learning opportunities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Achievement in the classroom is good. Coupled with the outstanding advances made in their personal development, it is clear that pupils are making excellent progress overall, a view glowingly endorsed by parents. In Further Education achievement is outstanding. This reflects students' great success in gaining qualifications that reflect their grasp of basic skills, their growing maturity and independence and their success in college and workplace settings. This year, two students have been entered for GCSE examinations. In the Intensive Support Centre success is measured in terms of the outstanding progress that pupils make in their communication, social, personal and self-help skills.

There is a huge range of ability. Nearly all pupils join the school with minimal previous learning. All pupils achieve outstandingly in their growing ability to communicate. Pupils with the greatest disability painstakingly develop their ability to signal choices through the tiniest bodily movements, and those with no speech make great strides in expressing themselves with help from Picture Exchange or Makaton signing systems. More able pupils are reaching Level 2 or 3 of the National Curriculum by the end of Year 11. Individual targets are frequently higher than those suggested by the local authority. Last year, at the end of Years 9 and 11, all pupils achieved their targets in English and mathematics. There was less success at the end of Year 6, where 75% met their targets in English, and 50% in mathematics. It is likely, as the school suggests, that Year 6 targets were more demanding, being based on over-optimistic assessment in earlier years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is where the school excels. Parents are overflowing with fully justified praise. Comments such as 'so happy at school, she cries when I collect her', 'totally transformed' and 'his life has been changed' are typical of their glowing comments. An inspirational ethos of care and spirituality shone through in rehearsals for the Christmas production. Pupils are wholehearted in their love of the school and are sociable in the extreme. This is made very evident in their enthusiasm to welcome visitors and talk about their lives. Pupils attend whenever they can but a small minority of pupils has lowered overall attendance by having extended stays in their heritage homelands. An outstanding drive for excellence has resulted in the award of Healthy School status, for which Tor View is now a flagship school. Pupils develop a strong understanding of what is right or wrong and make huge, invaluable strides in learning how to minimise any risk of harm to themselves. Behaviour is outstanding, misbehaviour is nearly always the consequence of confusion, anxiety or related to autistic tendencies. It is exceptionally well handled by staff. Pupils' cultural development is hugely impressive. The school is central to a creative partnership which co-ordinates arts events as a means of creating exciting and imaginative ways to work with and inspire pupils. Pupils are much admired

in the community. They have raised funds for charities and often host events such as coffee mornings and high quality school productions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching is good overall. Outstanding teaching is frequently seen in Further Education, where many lessons are characterised by pace and sparkle, and the Intensive Support Centre where supremely refined skills bring out the best in a group of extremely challenging pupils. Good teaching is the norm, with many examples of exemplary planning which reflects an acute awareness of the huge range of need in each classroom. This means that pupils are given tasks that challenge without out-facing them. Confident, skilled management of staff teams in each classroom ensures that support is given where it is most needed or most effective. Staff are particularly adept at using signing and other aids to communicate with pupils. The difference between outstanding and good teaching is how much the teacher packs into a lesson. An adult literacy lesson in Further Education buzzed. It was conducted at a cracking pace and expectations were exceptionally high. Students quickly latched on to the teacher's enthusiasm, were driven on by well-deserved praise and made outstanding progress in developing their literacy for independence skills. A lesson in the primary department on the other hand, dwelt over-long on an introductory activity, where the teacher did most of the work and trailed off into the main activity, which only moderately interested or challenged pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It covers a huge range and includes subjects, courses and experiences supremely well adapted to the needs of all learners. These range from a totally sensory level to two pupils in Year 11 who are studying for GCSEs this year. A fifth of all pupils are taught in mainstream schools each morning and many others join in with selected lessons at other times. There is a massive degree of enrichment through a packed programme of visits, including residential experiences for all pupils, and the wide range of visitors who share their skills and experiences. The school day is wonderfully extended. For four nights each week and one day every weekend pupils are welcomed to join in with a huge range of activities led by play-leaders and parents. One parent commented 'Out of School Club allows my son to participate in skiing, sport and cycling – fantastic'. A group of pupils is visiting Switzerland on a skiing trip at the end of term.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is exceptional. The school has the total confidence of parents who are unanimous in their view that the school is a safe, caring place. The extensive involvement of professionals, such as speech and language, occupational and physiotherapists ensures that individual needs are particularly well met. Great attention is paid to maintaining the dignity of pupils during intimate care. Pupils' views are carefully listened to and older ones are given excellent guidance about their future options. Parents and pupils are fully involved in setting targets and reviewing progress at frequent intervals. Child protection procedures are robust and immaculately observed. Great care is taken to identify possible risks in activities and certain pupils have high quality individual care and handling plans to ensure that staff can deal consistently and safely with problems. To protect and support them out of school, pupils learn about road safety, cycling proficiency and independent travel.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school rather modestly says they are good. This reflects leaders' exceptionally high expectations and an immense commitment to seeking improvement and banishing complacency. The headteacher and senior staff have a crystal clear vision forged through extensive consultation with staff, parents, agencies and other schools. They are keen to innovate and make sure they are successful when they do. Incredibly successful inclusion programmes and their vision for an 'extended school' can be held up as setting an excellent example to other schools. Thorough, analytical monitoring helps the school to pinpoint areas that can be improved. There is a continuing, strong drive to improve teaching. It is aided by an excellent programme of staff development which includes postgraduate study in autism, profound and multiple learning difficulties and multi-sensory impairment. The quality of training is clearly evident in the expanding skills of staff and the number who gain promotion. In this respect the school is a victim of its own success. As staff move on, new appointments are made and the training cycle is repeated for less experienced replacements. This largely explains why teaching remains good rather than outstanding. The school is blessed with an outstandingly committed governing body. They are as critical and questioning as they are supportive and have been hugely influential in ensuring that the school keeps improving. Resources are managed with supreme efficiency. School facilities are used extensively by the community and management has an impeccable track record of chasing new sources of funding for its projects. As a result, the school is in a healthy financial state and very well positioned to keep leading the field.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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14 December 2005

Dear pupils and students

Some of you may remember me. I visited your school the other day, had a good look round and chatted to a few of you. My main reason for coming was to see how well you were getting on. I've written a little report to attach to this letter. I've shortened it for you.

It says:

Tor View is an amazing school

you are fabulous young people, happy, polite and sociable

you have wonderful opportunities to work with your friends in other schools

the after-school and weekend clubs are incredibly successful

those of you in Further Education and the Intensive Support Centre are doing brilliantly

you are well taught

you have an exceptionally inspired headmaster.

Not bad then?

Part of my job is to leave a little something for the school to remember me by. Here, I noticed that in a few lessons the 'starter activity' seemed longer than the 'main activity'. I'm sure it's meant to be the other way round so I've asked the school to look at this.

It was a true pleasure to meet you. I won't be forgetting your rehearsals for the Christmas presentation in a hurry.

All the best

Alastair Younger (Lead inspector)