



Brookfield School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119895
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 299855
Inspection date 28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Garry Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Fouldrey Avenue
School category	Community special		Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	11–16		FY6 7HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 886895
Number on roll (school)	26	Fax number	01253 881188
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Brian Wilson
		Headteacher	Mrs Sue Sanderson
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average special school. It draws students from a wide area including the Fylde, north and east Lancashire. Many students have to travel long distances to attend the school. All students have a statement of special educational need to provide for their severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition, a high proportion of students have additional learning difficulties, which include specific learning difficulties, ADHD and ASD. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above the national average and reflects the high levels of socio-economic deprivation faced by many families. All students are boys and all are of White British origin. In recent years the recruitment of staff has been difficult and the school was without a substantive headteacher for almost two years, however, the staffing situation is now stable. When the school was last inspected in February 2005 it was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its students and gives satisfactory value for money. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire had a generally positive view of the school and an increasing number are actively involved in the education of their children. Students enter the school with a history of education that has often involved significant periods of disruption due to their severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many students have a history of poor attendance and have often been out of school for extended periods. The personal development and well-being of the students and their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development are now satisfactory. Over the last two years there has been a steady improvement in the attitudes of the students. Behaviour around the school and in lessons, while not always perfect, is satisfactory. Students report that there is a friendlier atmosphere. There is less bullying and when incidents occur they are effectively dealt with by staff. Students report that they feel safe in school and that they have someone to talk to if they face difficulties. Students are aware of the elements of healthy living and many take regular exercise at break and lunchtime, however, they are ready to admit that they do not always make healthy choices. The attendance of the students is well below average and is unsatisfactory. The school monitors attendance thoroughly and is addressing issues of non-attendance vigorously, but with variable success. Students are beginning to make a contribution to the school community through the school council and on occasions contribute to the wider community, for example through charity fundraising, but this remains an area for development. The pastoral care of students is good. Students are supported well by their form teacher and the support assistant attached to each form. Targets for behaviour and achievement are reviewed at key points in the day and at the end of some lessons. Students value the reward system that is in operation and the access it provides to recreational opportunities on Friday afternoons. However, the use of targets for academic improvement and the guidance provided are inconsistent.

Students' attainment on entry to the school is generally well below the levels expected of students of their age. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages remain below average. However, progress across the key stages is satisfactory and all students gain external accreditation through a range of GCSE and entry level qualifications. This progress reflects the satisfactory teaching that the students receive. Teaching has improved steadily since the last inspection and there is now better planning, clearer learning objectives and improved assessment. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory but there is not enough good teaching. The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The provision at Key Stage 4 has been extended through links with local colleges of further education and some limited provision for extended work placements to better meet the needs of students. However, there is an insufficient range of courses to fully meet the interests and aspirations of all students. Opportunities to enrich the curriculum are well used, but the range of extra-curricular activities is limited, in part, by the distances students travel to school.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and promotes it strongly. She and the newly established senior leadership team have clearly defined roles and are working hard to bring about improvement. There are sound systems for monitoring and evaluating progress and for planning for improvement. The self-evaluation of the school was broadly accurate and identified the strengths and areas for development. The leadership team is supported by an increasingly effective governing body. It is well led by an experienced chair of governors and has started to hold the school to account for its progress and to truly act as a critical friend. There is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of students by increasing the amount of good teaching.
- Review the curriculum to diversify the range of vocational courses available at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure consistency in the use of attainment targets and the provision of advice for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Students enter the school with standards of attainment that are well below those expected of students of a similar age. This reflects the emotional and behavioural difficulties students have and the resultant disruption to their education. In 2006 the attainment in national tests at Key Stage 3 was well below that found nationally and not all students sat the tests. However, all students in Year 11 gained GCSE qualifications. Three students gained five passes and the other three students gained four passes; all passed English, English literature and science and half passed mathematics. The progress students make is satisfactory, although it is not always consistent in every year. The school monitors progress thoroughly and is able to show the progress of each individual student and to set them challenging targets for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of the students are satisfactory as is their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. Behaviour around the school and in lessons, while not always perfect, is satisfactory. Students are increasingly taking responsibility for their own actions and are sensibly evaluating each other's behaviour at the end of some lessons. Students report that the school is a friendlier place than it used to be. The calm atmosphere in assemblies and at lunch, when staff and students eat together and chat, illustrates the improvement in the relationships. Incidents of bullying have fallen and when it occurs it is effectively dealt with by staff. Students report that they feel safe in school and that they have someone to talk to if they face difficulties. They are aware of the elements of healthy living and the majority take

exercise during each break and lunchtime. The school council has discussed school meals with the catering service and as a result, there are healthier options available. Although students are aware of the demands of healthy living they are ready to admit that they do not always make healthy choices. The attendance of the students is well below average and is unsatisfactory. In part, this reflects the distances students have to travel, their difficult home circumstances and established patterns of non-attendance that take time to modify. The school monitors attendance thoroughly and is addressing issues of non-attendance vigorously with some notable individual successes. Students are beginning to make a contribution to the school community through the school council and on occasions contribute to the wider community, for example through charity fundraising, but this remains an area for development. The sound development of skills for future economic well-being is supported by work experience, access to vocational courses and the development of basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, although no unsatisfactory teaching was observed there is too little good teaching. The pace of learning is only satisfactory as students' attitudes to learning are not yet sufficiently positive and they do not consistently apply themselves to the tasks with enough determination. In too many lessons inappropriate behaviour by an individual learner disrupts the learning environment, although students generally continue with their work and ignore the incident. However, relationships between staff and students are generally good, the management of behaviour is sensitive and patient and support assistants are deployed well to assist students. Teachers plan carefully and there are clear learning objectives which are shared with the students. At times however, the objectives are not sufficiently clear or appropriately challenging to ensure that good learning takes place. In the most successful lessons the pace of learning is maintained through a range of activities, often practical, which engage students' interest. In these lessons teachers also use questions well to encourage students to extend their learning and explain their thinking. Assessment is beginning to inform planning. Marking is regular and often contains helpful advice and guidance. However, this good practice is not consistent across all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets statutory requirements. There are links during the summer term with a local high school to enhance the provision for design and technology in Key Stage 3 to counter the limited facilities available for the subject. A current national pilot, 'Musical Futures', is extending musical provision for all students at Key Stage 3 and widening their experience of performing with a range of instruments. In addition, the curriculum is enriched by visitors to the school from the local

community, a range of organisations and religious groups. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum has been broadened by establishing links with colleges of further education to provide vocational courses. However, these courses are not sufficiently varied to meet the full range of interests of all students. All students have the opportunity to undertake work experience and there are mini-enterprise activities in place. A range of accredited courses is offered at GCSE, entry level and through unit accreditation schemes. Accredited provision is being developed in personal education and citizenship through the Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). The development of a personalised curriculum is emerging; one student has a programme of vocational training and work experience to support his career plans whilst another is following GCSE English at a local high school to meet his request for greater challenge. There are two residential experiences available for some students each year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are established systems to ensure the health and safety of the students. Procedures for ensuring the appropriateness of all staff are in place and conform to current government guidance. The pastoral care of students is good. Staff know individuals well. There are clear improvement targets agreed for their behaviour and opportunities to gain points and rewards through meeting agreed expectations. Form tutors and support assistants work well together to support individual needs. There are established systems to support reintegration to lessons after withdrawal for poor behaviour or after fixed-term exclusions. Systems for dealing with bullying are rigorous and have resulted in a reduction in the severity and frequency of incidents. There are established links with external support agencies to meet the needs of students. Systems for academic guidance are not as well established and are inconsistently used. Arrangements for the induction of students new to the school are good and there is good support from Connexions, the local further education college and a training provider on planning for the next steps at the end of Year 11.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A newly established senior leadership team has clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The new headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and is providing strong leadership. There are satisfactory systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Teaching, standards and the quality of work are monitored closely and feedback and training are provided to staff. Planning for improvement is sound and identifies appropriate priorities. The process of self-evaluation is accurate, but as yet not all stakeholders are fully involved. The governing body is well led by an experienced chair of governors. It is increasingly holding the school to account for its actions and is taking on the role of a critical friend. It has planned training to further develop its role in self-evaluation. There is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Brookfield School

Fouldrey Avenue

Poulton-le-Fylde

Lancashire

FY6 7HE

28 February 2007

Dear Students

You may remember that I recently came to inspect your school. Thank you for being willing to talk to me about the school and your work. I have visited your school regularly over the last two years and it has been good to see how well many of you have developed.

Your school is now providing you with a satisfactory quality of education and no longer needs special measures to help it to improve. It has improved greatly over the last two years. It is well led by your headteacher and the staff are working together well to make it a better school. Although the behaviour of all of you is not always perfect it is generally satisfactory and you are increasingly willing to work cooperatively with each other and the staff. As a result, you are making better progress in lessons, although you could do better still. Some of you do not attend regularly enough and do not behave well enough for you to achieve all that you could. I think that the staff know you very well and are good at helping you to face up to your difficulties and to address them. They need all of your help if they are to succeed. You have many opportunities to do other activities, particularly on Friday, and some of you told me how much you enjoy your visits to the colleges you attend.

I have asked Mrs Sanderson and the staff to ensure that all of your lessons are as good as the best. I have also asked the staff to keep reminding you of your targets and what you need to do to improve the standard of your work. Finally, I have suggested that they see if they can arrange for even more practical courses for you when you reach Years 10 and 11 so that you have a greater choice.

I have enjoyed my visits to your school. Good luck for the future and get the most out of the school by attending regularly, working hard and behaving well.

Garry Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector