

# Tor View Community Special School - A Specialist Arts College

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 119891              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Lancashire          |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 327145              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 24–25 November 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Mel Blackband       |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| <b>Type of school</b>  | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>   | Community special  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 4–19   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |  |
| School (total)   | 119  |
| Sixth form   | 35   |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0  |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years                                     | 0  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Mr Peter Sweetmore   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Mr Andy Squire   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 1 December 2005  |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected                                       |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected                                       |
| <b>School address</b>  | Clod Lane<br>Haslingden<br>Rossendale<br>Lancashire<br>BB4 6LR |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4–19                |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 24–25 November 2008 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 327145              |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school provides for pupils with moderate, severe, complex and profound learning difficulties. A few pupils have physical disabilities or sensory impairment. Eleven pupils who have autism and challenging behaviour are taught in the Intensive Support Centre (ISC). Most pupils are White British but a small minority are from Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. The school provides weekend and holiday activities which are open to all families in the area who have a child with special needs. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award, the Artsmark and in 2007 achieved the status of a specialist school for Arts Education.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Tor View School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. It has continued to improve on its performance since the previous inspection when it was also judged to be outstanding. The school's leadership and staff have worked successfully to further improve the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of assessment and the tracking of the pupils' performance and consequently the achievement of the pupils. The pupils' attainment remains far below that expected in mainstream schools but all the pupils do well in their studies and many make outstanding progress. Young children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) soon start to make excellent progress and this level of achievement continues all the way through school. As a result of excellent teaching, the students in post-16 provision and in the ISC make exceptional progress. The quality of teaching throughout the school has improved since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. Lessons are very well planned and are characterised by the high quality of support which pupils receive from their teachers and the well-trained assistants. As a result, the pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. The tracking of pupils' progress is now very effective and enables subject leaders to identify strengths in the pupils' learning and to intervene quickly when any slight slow down is detected in their performance. Occasionally there are inconsistencies in the way the small steps in progress are recorded.

The curriculum is outstanding because teachers tailor activities effectively to pupils' needs and abilities. As a result, pupils tackle challenging activities with interest and enthusiasm. These activities range from experiences at a sensory level for pupils with profound disabilities to specific courses leading to nationally accredited qualifications. The pupils benefit greatly from the specialist arts emphasis in the curriculum. The school is alive with music and singing and brightened by the high quality of displays. There are exemplary links with local schools whereby a large minority of pupils are taught in mainstream classes. The provision to teach the older students about the world of work and possibilities for further training is a strength of the school and last year resulted in all the leavers going on to further education.

The pupils thrive within the caring ethos of the school. All of them make excellent progress in their personal development. It underpins their excellent attitudes to learning and helps them to achieve their full potential. Pupils feel well supported and become confident learners. Teachers place a strong emphasis on personal, health and social education (PHSE) and this encourages the pupils to respect and value themselves and others. They learn to remain healthy and to keep themselves safe. The pupils value the school reflected in the excellent relationships they have with staff and their very good attendance. Parents feel confident that their children enjoy school and that it has high expectations of their achievements. One parent commented, 'She is now, for the first time, happy to attend school'.

The headteacher's substantial expertise and experience, complemented by the skills of the deputy headteacher have driven the continuing improvement. The school evaluates its work extremely well. It seeks and acts on the views of all connected with the school, not least the pupils themselves. The governing body is supportive and monitors aspects of the school's work effectively and robustly. There is an outstanding capacity to improve further because of the school's rigorous self-evaluation and the determination of the governors and staff to provide the best possible service for the pupils. The school therefore provides excellent value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Students make excellent progress in their personal development because of well planned procedures to help them gain the necessary self-confidence and independence to make their own choices and to prepare for adult life. Excellent teaching results in many of them continuing to make outstanding progress in literacy and numeracy, in their life skills, and in their grasp of work-related learning. The students are able to achieve their potential through a challenging range of accredited qualifications. As a result of their excellent progress, most students leave with the confidence and skills to go into further education. The provision is managed very well.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Management is excellent. All staff know the children very well and accompany this with excellent standards of planning and teaching, tailored to the needs of each individual. The children receive a high level of individual attention by caring and competent support staff. As a result, they make excellent progress in their learning and in their personal development. This provides a very good basis for their future success in the school.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that there is consistent recording of the small steps in pupils' learning to promote sharply defined learning targets

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

All the pupils achieve well and many make outstanding progress, although the pupils' overall standards of attainment remain far below average because of their learning difficulties. Young children in the EYFS make rapid progress and they maintain this momentum as they progress through the school. There is no evidence of underachievement by any group of pupils. The outstanding support for pupils with the most severe impairments, including those with challenging autism, ensures that these pupils make excellent progress in very small steps. The pupils' progress in gaining basic skills is outstanding and has a significant impact on their achievement throughout the curriculum. Most pupils make excellent progress in meeting challenging and very closely monitored targets in their individual key skills plans. Pupils in Year 11 through to Year 14 are able to demonstrate their potential through nationally accredited qualifications.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils' excellent progress in personal development reflects the school's strong emphasis on moral and social values. The school's records show how quickly pupils respond to its clear rules and how as a result their attitudes to learning improve and their rates of achievement accelerate. Pupils feel safe and confident and know what is expected of them within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils embrace a range of other cultures and celebrate these in displays, drama and in song. The pupils gradually develop a strong awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles through the many opportunities to take part in physical activity. Older students make

very good gains in acquiring life skills through the excellent careers provision and work experience. The attendance of most pupils is very good. Behaviour is exemplary. The pupils are emphatic that they feel free from bullying or unpleasantness and that they really look forward to coming to school. The many parents who returned questionnaires praised the school for its positive impact on their children's lives. Two parents who spoke for the overwhelming majority said, 'He has changed from a frustrated unhappy child to a well behaved and contented young man', and 'The smile on his face in the morning says it all.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers know their pupils very well and plan interesting, well-paced lessons. Lessons have clear objectives and pupils receive instant feedback on their performance. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. The small groups enable pupils to receive a high level of individual tuition from teachers and classroom assistants. They help the pupils to enjoy their lessons and try their best. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work very effectively. As a result, they plan challenging activities for each pupil enabling them to make good and often outstanding progress. However, on occasions, the inconsistencies in the way the pupils' very small steps in progress are recorded, results in their targets sometimes being less detailed than they could be. Pupils understand and respond to the clear routines. When a pupil's behaviour becomes unacceptable it is dealt with calmly and with understanding and support for the pupil involved.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy a carefully constructed curriculum, which is exceptionally well adapted to their individual needs. The excellent levels of support for those with additional difficulties ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities and there are excellent opportunities for pupils, where appropriate, to take part in mainstream lessons at neighbouring schools. The provision for the development of pupils' personal skills has a significant impact on their achievement. The school's excellent programmes to develop pupils' communication and their basic literacy and numeracy skills are extremely effective both in promoting their confidence and supporting learning in other subjects. There is a wide range of activities to enrich the creative and artistic experiences of the pupils and to take them out of the classroom, showing them that they can learn new things in different situations. The school skiing trip, for example, is a highlight of the year and adds substantially to the pupils' social skills, self-confidence and their interest in learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The safeguarding of pupils is the greatest priority for school staff and standards are exceptionally high. The pupils are proud of their successes and they like the way that staff discuss with them how well they are doing in their work and personal development and how they can improve their attainments. As a result, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to make their work better and this has a very positive impact on their achievement. Parents receive accurate and comprehensive progress reports and maintain a high degree of satisfaction with their level of involvement in their children's education. The pupils receive good advice and support as

they are about to leave school and staff very successfully prepare students to move into adult social care or onto appropriate college courses.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Excellent leadership and management have enabled the school to build on the outstanding provision found at the previous inspection. One of the school's many strengths lies in the rigorous and analytical way managers monitor, evaluate and improve on every aspect of the pupils' academic and personal achievement. For example, the school's leaders have appropriate plans to ensure consistency in the recording of pupils' progress. There are very effective procedures to measure and improve the performance of teachers and other staff. High levels of professional training are well planned, focus on the needs of the pupils, and make a significant contribution to their outstanding achievement. Community cohesion is excellent especially in the school's links with other education establishments which enable students to further advance their education. Governors provide excellent support to the school; they work closely with individual staff and they effectively monitor the school's strengths and areas for development.



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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 1   | 1   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?  | 1   | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 1   | 1   |

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>       | 1 |  |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve?   | 1 |  |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |  |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 1 |  |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 1 |  |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?                                 | 1 |  |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 1 | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress                           | 1 | 1 |

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 1 | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |   |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 |   |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |   |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education  | 1 |   |
| The attendance of learners  | 1 |   |
| The behaviour of learners   | 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

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 1 | 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 |

## Leadership and management

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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   | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 2   | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   | 1   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated   | 1   | 1   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 1   | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   | 1   |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?  | Yes | 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

2 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tor View Community Special School - A Specialist Arts College, Lancashire, BB4 6LR

Not long ago I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether I could suggest anything to make the school better. You made me very welcome and I enjoyed meeting some of you in your classrooms and at lunchtime. Thank you and well done. I could see that you all enjoy school very much. I was with you for two days. That was long enough for me to realise that you go to a super school. I liked many things. Here are a few:

- you work hard and make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development
- the many different people at the school look after you very well
- you do many really interesting activities including those that help you become independent, make choices and learn all about different places and customs
- all the adults work really hard to give you as much help as possible and they are very good at preparing interesting work for each of you
- your headteacher runs the school very well and everyone, including your parents, gives him really strong support.

I think the school could improve even further if all the little improvements you make in your work were always written down carefully. In that way you could be helped to do even better.

You can play your part too, just by working as hard as you have been doing!

Please thank your parents for all the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Mel Blackband

Lead inspector