

Brookfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119895
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327147
Inspection date	15 May 2009
Reporting inspector	David Muir HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rod Steele
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Sanderson
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
School address	Fouldrey Avenue Poulton-le-Fylde Lancashire FY6 7HE
Telephone number	01253 886895
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average special school. It draws students from a wide area of north and east Lancashire. Many students travel long distances to get to school. All students have a statement of special educational need to provide for their social, emotional and behavioural needs and a significant proportion of students have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Students are now coming in to the school with increasingly complex needs. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is currently 50%, which is significantly above the national average. This reflects the high levels of socio-economic deprivation faced by many families, whose children attend the school. The school also experiences a high level of students leaving or arriving at the school at times other than the start or end of the year. All of the current students are boys and are from a White British background. The school has gained several awards including Healthy Schools Award and a Sports Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which has improved rapidly since being removed from special measures during its previous inspection. It meets the needs of its students through well managed provision of an increasingly high standard.

Standards are below average although students make good progress during their time in the school. The systems, which the school uses to monitor progress, show that most students make significant improvements in their academic and social skills.

Students' personal development is satisfactory, as is their behaviour. Although attendance is below average it has improved markedly in recent years. This demonstrates that the school has made significant progress in improving the attendance of pupils who were poor attenders in their previous schools. Most students say that they enjoy coming to school and they benefit from their time there. The consistent handling of challenging behaviour by staff allows students to be educated in an environment of respect and high expectations. The school promotes social, moral, spiritual and cultural development satisfactorily and students are exposed to cultures and religions different from their own. The school is aware that it needs to work on building relationships with the local community. Students' awareness of healthy lifestyles and their own safety are well promoted by the school. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the impact of the school's work on the lives of their children.

Staff know the students well and use this knowledge to match the good curriculum well to the students' needs. Lessons consistently show a range of work and support well suited to students' needs. The school works effectively with a wide range of external agencies so that all students receive good care and guidance. Transition in to the next stage of the students' lives is well planned.

Leadership and management are good throughout the school. Everyone shares the same vision and understands what the school is trying to achieve. Procedures are in place to accurately monitor the performance of the school and identify the next steps for improvement. The school meets all requirements for safeguarding. The school's role in promoting community cohesion is satisfactory.

Governors provide excellent support and challenge to the school and have a good knowledge of its work. Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish links with the local community to promote community cohesion.
- Improve the attendance, especially of the persistently poor attenders.
- Continue to develop students' social skills and their awareness of the effect their behaviour has on others.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards of students on entry to school are generally well below average. By the time students leave school, their standards are below average, although some students do reach age-appropriate expectations and a small minority exceed these. Students are assessed

thoroughly on entry to school and their progress is meticulously tracked throughout their time in the school. This information, supported by inspection evidence indicates that overall, most students make good progress and a minority of students make outstanding progress. All groups of students, such as those with ASD and ADHD, achieve well in line with other students in the school. The few students who underachieve compared with their targets do so, due to factors such as poor attendance or are experiencing significant disruption in their lives and the school is working hard to overcome these obstacles to learning.

The school knows the students, their backgrounds and their needs well and appropriate targets are set which are realistic and challenging. Generally, students achieve or exceed these targets. The school's monitoring and evaluation shows that there are no significant differences in achievement between subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students are very welcoming and proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school. The lower than average attendance figures are the result of a few students who, despite the school's determined efforts, remain stubbornly poor attenders. During their time in the school, students develop increasingly positive attitudes to learning and their social skills develop so that they learn to relate better to those around them, although it remains a continuing area for development. Behaviour is satisfactory and the number of reported incidents is reducing due to the consistent way behaviour is managed by staff. Students are increasingly able to manage their behaviour by the use of provision, such as timeout rooms. Students feel safe and say that bullying is rare. The daily assembly and the curriculum work well to satisfactorily promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. 'Focus weeks', such as 'World Week', also help to raise awareness of other cultures and issues and are valued by students. Students enthusiastically participate in lessons and are proud of their achievements. They contribute well to the school community and respect their surroundings. Students do not yet contribute enough to the wider community, but the school is aware of this and is developing plans to do so. Students are well informed about healthy lifestyles, through the curriculum and displays in the care and welfare corridor, although they do not always make healthy choices. The good progress in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and social skills means that students start to develop workplace skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All the teaching in the school is at least satisfactory and most of it is good. The proportion of good teaching has increased since the previous inspection. This is due to the robust and decisive action of senior leaders to transform the school in to one which places a high value on learning for all. Systems for tracking the progress of all students are highly effective and staff know which levels the students are working at. Students are aware of their levels in different subjects. Teachers and support staff know all of the students well and the best planning shows that work is well matched to students' individual needs and interests. This allows all students to be engaged and effectively challenged in their learning. The better teaching leads to good progress for students and in these lessons they demonstrate good attitudes to their learning and behaviour. Teaching assistants provide valuable support in lessons as they know the students

well. Students work independently, or with others, as required, and they are starting to be able to evaluate their progress against their targets. In the less effective lessons, students can become disengaged and their progress is lessened.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of all students effectively. This shows in the good progress made by students at both key stages. At Key Stage 3, the school uses a themed approach and has designed curriculum maps, which show strong links between the different subjects and how they support learning effectively. This enables students make successful transitions from their primary schools. At Key Stage 4, there is an increasing number of exams and courses available at different levels. These include GCSEs, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards and the certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE). The school also uses other providers, such as high schools and colleges, to offer more choice of subjects, such as horticulture and art and design, to add variety, breadth and relevance to the curriculum. The Key Stage 4 curriculum also provides opportunities for work related learning and the school ensures that these placements are appropriate and of a good quality.

A range of visitors to the school and focus weeks broaden students' experiences through a variety of learning opportunities across the curriculum. Other activities provided, include a range of educational visits and opportunities for residential stays in the Lake District. These activities give students opportunities to gain confidence in situations different from their everyday lives and contribute to the students' social and cultural development and awareness of healthy lifestyles and personal safety. There are plenty of visits from the local community, including the police and fire services.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a supportive and caring environment which has high expectations for all of its students. All staff are committed to ensuring that students are well educated and looked after during their time in the school. A range of support is available within the school and from external agencies to meet the individual needs of students, so that they progress well. There are clear policies and procedures in place to promote child protection, which are understood by all staff. Risk assessments are thorough and carefully attended to. Students are aware of their own challenging targets for subjects and their behaviour. They know the levels at which they are working and how they can move to the next level. Marking and feedback to students is good and is consistent between subjects. Feedback provides a comment about work done and a suggestion for how to continue to improve in their work. From Year 9, students are given initial opportunities, with the local Young People's Service, to start to plan for when they leave school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who is ably supported by a very effective senior leadership team, the school now has a clear vision and direction for its continued

improvement. Staff are committed, energetic and work well as a team. There is a shared belief amongst the staff and students of how to raise standards and this has contributed significantly to the school's improvements since the last inspection.

The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of its work are robust, and reliable. Self-evaluation judgements are largely accurate, but slightly underestimate what has been achieved. The leaders of the subjects are more skilled at evaluating the work of their departments, than they were at the time of the last inspection, ensuring consistency throughout the school. Targets are set for improvement, which are challenging and raise standards in the school. The systems in place to track the progress of students identify any potential underachievement, so that support can be provided as necessary.

Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily and any racist incidents which occur are reported as required. Community cohesion is satisfactory as the school has developed a strong school community and awareness of other communities and is planning to develop links with the local community.

The school's improvement since the last inspection, the plans for future improvement and the robust systems for monitoring its work demonstrate the school has a good capacity to continue to improve. The governing body provides outstanding support and challenge to the leadership of the school. Governors are well known to all members of the school community, through their hands on, dynamic approach to knowing the school. The school provides good value for money.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

18 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Brookfield School, Lancashire, FY6 7HE

Thank you very much for welcoming me when I inspected your school recently. I was very pleased to meet you, hear your views about the school and to see you at work. I enjoyed my day and was happy to see how proud you were of your school. It is clear that the school has moved on a lot in the past two years and you are right to feel proud of this.

I found it to be a good school and it is improving quickly. It is well led by the headteacher. She knows what needs to be done to improve your school even more. Your teachers and support staff enjoy teaching you and they work hard to make sure that you learn as much as you can and that you can increasingly manage your own behaviour. Teachers know what level you are working in each subject and they help you to set challenging targets to improve your work and your behaviour. Your behaviour is satisfactory and I was pleased to see how much you enjoy school. Your attendance is getting better, although some of you still miss too much school, and so don't learn as much as you could. You know about how to be healthy but some of you don't always make the healthiest choices. Your school is a strong community, but now you need to start making links with the community outside the school. Your parents are very happy with how the school works with you.

I have asked the school to improve in three areas, so that you can be more successful in school.

- To establish links with the local community to promote community cohesion.
- To improve the attendance, especially of those of you who are poor attenders.
- To continue to develop your social skills and your awareness of the effect your behaviour has on others.

I wish you all the best of success in the future and I thank you again for your warm welcome.

Yours faithfully

David Muir HMI