

Rawtenstall Cribden House Community Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119879
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339542
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Marian Thomas

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Pilling
Headteacher	Mrs Jacqueline Lord
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons and held meetings with senior leaders, governors, staff and groups of pupils, including the school council. They observed the school's work and looked at all safeguarding documentation, teachers planning, the school development plan and pupils' work.

- the progress made by different groups of pupils
- the quality of teaching in lessons
- the school curriculum and how it meets the needs of all learners.

Information about the school

This is a school which provides for 40 primary pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some pupils have additional special educational needs and/or learning difficulties. There are currently 38 children on roll from the East Lancashire area. Each pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Currently all but two pupils are boys and all but one pupil is of White British heritage. Approximately one fifth of pupils are in the care of the local authority.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which delivers outstanding care, guidance and support. It is highly supportive and welcomes new arrivals, who quickly become valued members of the school community. Pupils are cared for extremely well. They feel very safe and secure and readily turn to adults when in need of help or reassurance.

Pupils improve their self-discipline after joining the school. As a result, behaviour is good. The recent introduction of a more inventive and exciting curriculum has engaged learners well. As a result pupils' writing and numeracy skills are improving. The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school and comments such as, 'Cribden House is an excellent school. My child has progressed in leaps and bounds since joining.' reflect their views.

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is generally good. Achievement for all groups including those with additional needs is good. This is despite most having previous gaps in their learning. This is due to good quality teaching and learning, and the commitment of staff and governors, who share the leadership team's vision and high ambitions. Improvements since the last inspection have resulted in pupils' progress being closely tracked and gaps in areas of learning have been effectively tackled. For example, after the analysis of progress data, the school identified that pupils found difficulty in problem-solving in mathematics. This has now become a key focus for mathematics teaching throughout the school. Pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is enhanced by strong links with an ethnically diverse local primary school.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. They are very effective in driving forward improvements in teaching and learning. As a result there is some excellent teaching. However, there are a few occasions when teaching is no better than satisfactory and, as a result, pupils' achievement is not as good as it could be. This is because support staff are not always deployed effectively enough and staff do not always use their assessments of pupils' work to help them to plan future learning. As a result some pupils are insufficiently challenged to reach their learning and behavioural targets.

Relationships with outside agencies including health and social care professionals are exceptionally good as are links with a range of local schools. Links with parents are also very strong and the school works with them so that they can be partners in their child's education. Although the school has seen some changes in the pupil population, good leadership and management have ensured that it has maintained the many strengths noted at the last inspection. There is an atmosphere of high expectation and a

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commitment and enthusiasm from all to achieve further improvement. The school is demonstrating good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons teaching and learning is good or better so that pupils achieve as well as possible
 - ensuring that support staff are used effectively to support learning at all times
- making sure that all staff effectively use the information they have about pupils' current attainment to plan work that enables pupils to make the maximum progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils try very hard and most approach learning with enthusiasm. Relationships with staff are very good and an atmosphere of trust prevails. This allows pupils to respond positively to staff's high expectations and re-engage with learning. Consequently, most pupils achieve and some exceed the challenging academic and/or behavioural targets they are set, despite the significant gaps in their learning and their previous difficulties in behaving appropriately. Through individual learning programmes the school caters effectively for all individuals. As a result pupils of different abilities, including those with complex behavioural needs, achieve well. Although the standards reached by pupils when they leave are currently below those in mainstream schools, this represents good, and in some cases, outstanding progress from their starting points.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins their academic progress. They develop confidence and independence, and work together well, often showing great respect for each other's differences. In a class mathematics lesson, it was noticeable how well pupils listened to each other's views as talking partners. Pupils say they feel exceptionally safe in school. As a result they are able to explore their feelings and this helps them to start to control their emotions. Most develop a sense of justice and fairness, as seen during a playtime game of cricket where pupils showed politeness and took turns. Pupils take part in many exciting physical and sporting activities, both through the curriculum and the extended day provision. They understand how to choose a healthy lifestyle. This is recognised by the school's Healthy Schools Flagship award and the recent excellent improvement in the contents of pupils' lunch-boxes. Pupils contribute very well to school life through the school council. They know that their views are listened to and acted upon. One described his role as a school councillor as, 'The best thing I have ever done because I can help make things even better here.'

Pupils make a large contribution to the local and wider community. An example is their fund-raising for local and global charities, including helping to build a well for village children in Ethiopia. Pupils are keen to take on roles within school as monitors and playground buddies. Their views are frequently asked for through surveys and they have

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joined with staff in the development of a more creative curriculum. This good development of their personal and basic skills, and their good attendance, ensure that pupils are effectively prepared for their future well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Staff frequently praise and encourage pupils in their lessons and, as a result, a harmonious working atmosphere is achieved. Their approach to behaviour management is highly effective, as is target-setting. As a result pupils are left in no doubt of what is expected. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most use this and different teaching approaches successfully to make learning interesting and meaningful. They use interactive whiteboards and other resources to make learning relevant as well as fun. An outside dragon hunt, in which footprints and traces of eggshell were found, excited and inspired one group of boys who went on to produce some excellent poems. Support staff are usually effective and contribute skilfully to learning and behaviour. Occasionally, however, they are not sufficiently well directed to ensure they have maximum impact. Where this happens pupils' learning slows and behaviour is less good.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' skills on entry are accurately assessed. A comprehensive system enables each pupil's progress to be tracked and monitored. This system, along with staff's very good knowledge of individual pupils, ensures that challenging targets are set that closely match pupils' needs. There are a few lessons however where staff do not ask pupils to comment on their learning. As a result pupils' contribution to their own learning is less good.

The good curriculum closely reflects pupils' needs. The recent introduction of a more creative approach has enhanced learning well. The inclusion of pupils in the planning process has ensured that it is relevant to all learners. Curricular enhancement opportunities are many and varied and include some exciting partnerships with other local schools. For example, during a joint session with a local primary school, pupils' participation in team building activities benefitted all pupils and strengthened pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society. Through the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme, pupils' personal development is given high priority. This impacts well on individual pupils' behaviour.

The support, guidance and care given to pupils are outstanding. The vast majority of parents value the very close links they have with the school. One commented, 'My child and I both feel that we can both speak to any member of staff and they will be there to support us.' Vulnerable students are very carefully monitored and interventions are very well organised to ensure that they achieve well. Close links with outside agencies ensure they are very well supported. Pupils are closely supported when leaving or joining the school and they and their parents are given excellent guidance for the next steps in their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are strongly committed to continuous improvement for individual pupils and the school as a whole. They have set out and communicated a clear vision for improvement. Governors provide constructive support and challenge because they are well informed and have a good range of skills. They ensure that they meet their statutory duties well and that safeguarding procedures are effective. Self-evaluation is rigorous and honest because senior leaders understand well the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result the school development plan reflects those areas that are most in need of improvement. Resources are well deployed

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to achieve positive outcomes for pupils and the school provides good value for money. The headteacher and school staff have developed excellent links with pupils' families. This is reflected in the positive comments received by the inspection team, and in the strong attendance at the recently formed parent support group, which provides a forum for parents to meet, share experiences and to learn from other professionals.

The school's work is focused successfully on providing pupils with equal opportunities. It does this by effectively tailoring work and support to meet individuals' needs, which reflect the school's strongly inclusive nature. Community cohesion is good. The school shows a strong commitment to promoting cohesion both within and beyond the school. It has undertaken an audit of its work, can clearly identify its impact and has effective plans to develop further engagement with its wider United Kingdom partnerships. Through its very strong links with others it effectively promotes cohesion, both locally and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspection team received 14 responses from parents and carers and spoke to the parent governor. The overwhelming view from parents and carers was that the care pupils received at the school was excellent. They felt that school staff communicated with them very well and supported the whole family when needed.

This view agreed with inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rawtenstall Cribden House Community Special School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 38 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	50	6	43	1	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	57	5	36	1	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	64	5	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	64	5	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my school lunch. You are right they are very tasty. Thank you for letting me join your school council meeting, I was impressed by the grown up way you run it and how seriously you take your roles. I enjoyed talking to all of you and was impressed by your thoughtful views.

You go to a good school and I am very happy at the way in which all staff care for you and, as a result, how safe you all feel. Your teachers work hard to make lessons fun and exciting and I know you especially enjoy the different topics you now learn about. I thought the dragon walk that some of you went on sounded very exciting and it helped you to write some good poetry afterwards. Most of you behave well and when things do not go quite right for you staff are there to help you to understand your feelings.

In order to make your school even better, I have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- make sure that all your lessons are good so you do even better, and that adults help you to learn quickly by working with you more closely in the classroom
- help you to tell each other and your teachers how well you understand your lessons and, when you do not understand the first time, to go back and try again.

I hope your Christmas concert goes well and you all moo and bleat in the right places.

Yours sincerely

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