

Broadfield Specialist School

Fielding Lane, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 3BE

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students in all key stages make rapid and sustained progress over time. As they travel through the school, students are consistently well supported to achieve the very best that they can. Expectations of what students are capable of achieving are exceptionally high and, as a result, students reach their full potential.
- All staff are experienced and highly trained in different aspects of special needs or specialist subjects. This, along with an exceptionally high level of care ensures students, including those with profound and complex difficulties, achieve extremely well from their starting points.
- Support staff are a huge strength of the school. They are often extremely well trained and focus constantly on students' well-being, personal development and academic achievements.
- Some students gain outstanding personal achievements due to the targeted support that they receive to unleash their talents in poetry, music, drama, singing and art. As a result, some students' personal achievements are exceptional.
- The sixth form provision and leadership is outstanding. Students achieve success in many different areas. It is innovative in its approach as vocational work placements are wide and varied. All students are encouraged to succeed through an individually tailored approach.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding and their attitudes are exemplary in all key stages.
- Very effective arrangements are in place to ensure all students are safe and all safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. She constantly ensures that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum are embedded across each key stage. Her sensitive approach yet steely determination results in a strategic and sympathetic drive for as much success as possible for all the staff and students.
- The very able deputy headteachers have a crystal clear overview of strengths and weaknesses at the school. They are well supported by senior and middle leaders who have a range of diverse skills. Together, leaders ensure that teaching and students' achievement continue to improve.
- Governors have a very clear understanding of parental needs and anxieties. They are extremely supportive of the school and challenge leaders to constantly provide exemplary practice for all.
- Leaders and governors know that their next steps are to drive forward improvements to the school's physical environment in order to meet the students' increasing demands and complex needs even more closely, especially in the sixth form.
- The curriculum is particularly well adapted to meet students' needs. Therapy sessions, for example, help to ensure those with sensory needs or physical difficulties achieve exceptionally well. The innovative 'Young Men's Group' supports teenage boys so they are well prepared for modern life.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons involving 18 different teachers. The majority of observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or with one of the two deputy headteachers. Walks around the school were conducted and learning was observed in different key stages. An inspector listened to students read from Years 7, 11 and 13. Inspectors observed support for students in whole-class sessions and with individual students.
- Inspectors looked in detail at the work in students' books, files and online from across the school. Three meetings were held with groups of students where they talked about their work and their perceptions of the school. An inspector interviewed six members from the school council.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff and different groups of students. They interviewed members of the governing body and spoke to a range of representatives from the therapy department. Documentation about the school's use of outreach provision was also considered.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's summary of its view of its own performance; the school development plan; policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding; information about students' attendance and behaviour; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; information about students' achievement and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- There were 24 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and inspectors looked at summaries of school questionnaires sent out to parents and students recently. They also took account of the 63 responses to the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kevin Boyle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Broadfield Specialist School caters for students with learning difficulties. The students' special needs range from moderate to profound and often with multiple learning difficulties. Almost half have autistic spectrum conditions, often in combination with other learning difficulties. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- In 2011, there was a considerable reorganisation and a redesignation of the school, with primary-aged pupils transferring to another school. Many staff and students from two other schools transferred into the school at this time.
- All students are now of secondary school age and a new sixth form has been created. Parents know this as the Further Education department. Currently, sixth form students are taught in temporary mobile accommodation while the sixth form block is being updated. Some of the sixth form students attend Nelson & Colne College on a Wednesday.
- The school works closely with the Tor View Teaching Alliance and delivers special needs outreach work to support pupils in mainstream schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has specialist school status for special educational needs in cognition and learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the physical environment so that the whole-school community can meet even more effectively the increasing demands and often complex needs of all the students, and especially in the sixth form.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership. Her continuous drive and ambition to provide a high quality of education for all students are impressive. The deputy headteachers support the vision very well. The senior leadership team continually share ideas and look for ways to improve the school's work. The school is very well placed to maintain and improve on the higher standards reached at the end of Year 13 in 2014. Leaders know that students' progress has improved since the last inspection. Mathematics and English provision and outcomes are strengths of the school.
- The quality of teaching is checked frequently and, as a result, has improved consistently throughout the school and across all key stages. Senior leaders look carefully at lesson plans, the lessons taught and the students' progress in their work and their learning journeys. Leaders ensure that teachers' marking is impressive as it is differentiated depending on the special need of the student. For example, the system of 'PECS', which is a picture exchange communication system, is used regularly to improve students' cognitive ability. Different forms of technology are used to enhance cognitive ability and communication with different software programmes. This often results in celebratory and positive engagement and allows students to improve their work, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders ensure that the checks on students' work takes many different forms depending on the special need.
- Leaders and managers at all levels constantly pursue excellence in all they do. There is a highly successful drive to improve all aspects of the school provision and outcomes. Some students achieve well beyond all expectations, due to effective leadership systems and management processes. For example, with some support from the school when it is needed, some students are now in paid employment.
- Leaders ensure that students take part in worthwhile, well-planned experience with meaningful qualifications and opportunities to follow their interests. Students in Years 10 and 11 have choices as in mainstream schools. These 'Learning Pathways' are tailor made for individuals so that the provision is well suited to the students. For example, they are involved in learning French, GCSE Entry Level Design and Technology, Art, Drama, Music or Food Technology. They have an opportunity to gain qualifications in Personal Progress and there is a transition challenge for students in Year 10 with complex needs.
- Leaders continually strive to develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness so that inspirational ideas and innovation flourish. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Students are taught to be reflective when serving in the tuck shop, to be resilient in their food technology tasks and to use reasoning in their mathematical development, especially when they have to solve challenging algebraic problems. The school's unique, inspirational 'House Tokens' work helps students to target improvement in their own personal development and academic achievement. A typical student comment was, 'Our school helps us find what our talents are and then supports us to develop them'. Another comment was, 'I am a better person because I know what I am good at. I can sing, dance, play the drums and write a song. They show you that you can achieve. The staff help us with what we want to do.'
- The management of teachers' performance through setting targets linked to students' performance is extremely well organised and has a positive impact on students' learning. This is especially so for the higher functioning students with autistic spectrum disorder. However, students with very complex needs and profound learning difficulties still have challenging targets to achieve to ensure progress is maximised.
- Leaders' checks of the school's performance ensure that they have an excellent understanding of what is working well and what requires further attention. Plans to make improvements are discussed regularly at senior leadership team meetings. The checks they make on students' progress are effective and are helping to raise attainment and to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The work of middle leaders is very effective. They ensure that there is much that enriches the curriculum and strive to make it as exciting as possible. They have ensured that progress has been made from the previous inspection, especially in the provision for English and mathematics across other subject areas.
- Equality of opportunity is constantly promoted and leaders and managers are fully committed to tackling discrimination. Leaders ensure that sustainable and very positive relationships are established with the many different partnerships and particularly with parents and employers. Work with parents and partnerships are outstanding as communication, advice and support are all in place. Parents enjoy a welcome break with organised trips out to different places such as a major local shopping centre or the Christmas markets.
- Governors and leaders know that the physical environment is not purpose built and they do everything that they can to ensure students still make good or better progress. However, there are parts of the school that need improvement in the main building and the sixth form block. Often students have to wait as groups move from one part of the building to the other and on occasions this impacts on learning.

- Procedures and policies for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and are outstanding in the school.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this school. The school works with a number of local schools in the authority. The authority and outside agencies continue to seek places at the school because of successes in the past with other students. The headteacher works very closely with other providers to share some of the exemplary practice from the leadership and management of the school. The school is held in high esteem by the local authority and often supports pupils and staff in mainstream settings.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school exceptionally well and uses all the information and data about students' progress effectively to compare the school's performance with that of other similar schools locally and nationally. Governors provide excellent support and rigorous challenge in a quest for ongoing improvement. The school is increasing in popularity and is very well thought of in the local community.
 - The governors know how good the quality of teaching is. Governors know the importance of focused school performance management and its link to pay progression. Governors ensure that the pupil premium is used appropriately to make a significant difference to individual students resulting in good or better progress. The governing body checks on the impact that funding has on students' progress in all subjects and has made a positive impact on the improvements made in many areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Their attitude to work is exemplary and this makes a very positive contribution to their outstanding progress, especially higher up the school. At all times, teaching fully challenges and interests them, and they know how to improve their work. In subjects such as English or mathematics, they have different marking codes depending on their level of need and this helps them give their full attention to improving their work.
- Students are very proud of their school and of their achievements. A typical comment was, 'This school teaches us to recognise our own talents and to use those talents to succeed. It has made a difference to us. We are taught to celebrate how different we all are.' Overall, students agree that the school is helping them significantly to improve their academic achievement, behaviour and social well-being.
- There is a clear behaviour policy that students know about and follow. Students are very clear about what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. Adults are excellent role models for students to follow, particularly in relation to manners and attitudes.
- Students thoroughly enjoy the work that they complete for their house tokens. All the school's houses are named after the 'Accrington Pals' from the First World War. Students have produced a wonderful floral tribute that now stands at the war memorial in France. Students enjoy the competitive nature of the awards and the themed house events as this develops their teamwork skills and supports them with their social anxiety and emotions. When asked what was special about the school, students said, 'the relationships with the staff. We enjoy coming to school because of them. They help and support us to achieve the best we can.'
- Students are extremely polite and very well mannered to each other, to staff and visitors. They help and support each other in the dining room. They reflect during prayer time and then listen as a whole-school community to music, which helps them to relax, before they calmly start lessons in the afternoon.
- The students who attend Accrington College are well cared for in a safe environment and their behaviour is outstanding in this provision.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. There are many aspects of this work which are exemplary, for example, the individual health care plans and meetings which ensure all staff have an overview of certain students, to ensure they are kept safe and well. The 'Rebound Therapy' work on the trampoline is a particular favourite for students as they say they feel safe and secure due to extremely well organised high quality provision by well-trained staff.
- Students are well able to recognise the difference between bullying and falling out. They informed inspectors that bullying very rarely occurs and when it does staff are vigilant. Students are very confident about approaching adults in school if they need help to resolve any issue. Aspects such as learning about different types of bullying are exceptionally well planned for in key stage assemblies, in lessons and in therapy sessions.
- Students always know how to ask for help from the different staff. Some students work closely with

different support staff, therapists or mentors to achieve the best that they possibly can. The school has various programmes to support students if they are underachieving. This work, for example in art, music, drama, speaking and communication is extremely effective.

- Attendance issues are addressed very quickly. Staff have regular contact with parents and this establishes good attendance at school. The school has effectively impressed upon parents the need for their children to attend school regularly and this has paid dividends. Students unanimously enjoy coming to school. They enjoy receiving awards and praise for good attendance and realise the need for good attendance, linked to work placements.
- The student council and student voice initiatives ensure that staff listen regularly to their views about matters such as safety. Students say they feel safe and very well cared for in school, in the mini-bus, on their country walks out, when they go swimming or to the art gallery. They very much appreciate the wealth of support they receive when they have an issue in their life or are given help in their therapeutic sessions. The Young Men's Group is a firm favourite as it gives them an opportunity to discuss different issues about growing up.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The impact of the quality of the teaching over time is outstanding. Most teaching is good and much is outstanding because the activities given to students very clearly build on what they already know and can do and meet students' varying needs and abilities exceptionally well on a daily basis.
- Expectations of what students are capable of achieving are exceptionally high. For example, students are expected to solve mathematical problems showing the correct working out, step by step. They are moved on expertly as soon as they need more challenge, ensuring more rapid progress, such as with using algebra in mathematics.
- The teaching in English is improving strongly; expectations are always consistently high, especially in writing. Work always meets the needs of the students because they are motivated and engaged by their writing tasks. In addition, the quality of the differentiated marking is consistently strong across the different subjects or classes. Students are clear about the next steps needed to improve their writing. The teaching of literacy is strong across all key stages. In literacy lessons, tasks are often well thought out so that students learn quickly and ensure that they are given good opportunities to extend their reading and writing skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is always strong throughout the school because of well-matched provision, particularly for the most able and the higher functioning students with autistic spectrum disorder. They are provided with activities and challenges that stretch their mathematical thinking skills very effectively. Some students are involved in relevant practical mathematical activities, such as using coins to buy snacks and counting items from the trays. A range of practical or software activities engage students at an appropriate level to ensure that they make rapid progress depending on their special need.
- Improvements in teaching about the linking of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) have had a positive impact on standards in reading across the school. The students, and particularly the most able students, are always challenged with their reading tasks and enjoy the range of material on offer in the library.
- Learning support assistants are extremely well trained and have the necessary skills to support students in English and mathematics fully. They are so important and crucial in building very important relationships with the students. They are also kept sufficiently well informed of what students are expected to learn and so progress is rapid. The students appreciate the valuable input of the support staff, which enables them to make outstanding progress in both their academic and personal development.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All groups of students in all key stages achieve extremely well. Students often enter school with significantly below average levels of attainment. The education of some students has previously been disrupted over a period of time before arriving at Broadfield. This includes attending a number of different educational establishments. For some students, absence from school or disaffection has resulted in very low attainment and a lack of progress.
- Students' progress is outstanding overall in reading, writing and mathematics considering their low starting points. All students spoken to during the inspection said that they thoroughly enjoy their lessons.
- Students' efforts in lessons and individual group work are helping them make rapid progress and catch up. In a food technology lesson, for example, younger students were engaged and motivated to complete

their tasks of making pizzas. They knew exactly what it was that they had to achieve during the lesson and over time. Their efforts were recorded so that assessment of students' progress was instant. This kept them on task and this ensured that their progress was rapid. They were involved in designing and evaluating their work, which resulted in more rapid improvements in their writing skills.

- Achievement in reading is outstanding. Students often talk about how they follow their own interests with their different books. All students make significant progress with their reading skills considering their needs and starting points as a result of very effective teaching and support. The school library is used well to encourage a love of reading. Those who find reading difficult are well supported to make rapid progress. Students are actively encouraged to follow their interests when choosing their own reading material.
- Achievement in mathematics is excellent. Students are able to solve mathematical problems, such as those that involve simple algebraic formulas. They can gather relevant information independently, and work extremely well together by discussing the different ways to accomplish a set task. As a result, they learn at a rapid rate.
- By the end of Year 11, students' attainment is usually below average. However, all students make at least good and very often outstanding progress. Many students leave with some qualifications, typically at the lower end of the GCSE grade scale. Most students go on to further education in the school sixth form or training. This reflects the determination of the school's leadership and management to ensure students succeed beyond the school gate.
- There is very little difference between the performances of different groups of students. The number of students in each group is so small that an analysis to compare their performance does not generate particularly meaningful statistics. However, inspection evidence along with students' work confirms that all groups of students are making at least good and often outstanding progress. For example, the disadvantaged and the non-disadvantaged students in the school achieve equally well.
- The most able students make excellent progress as their work often provides an extra level of challenge so that students are stretched and achieve their full potential in all subject areas.
- Those who attend Accrington College make outstanding progress in developing their work related skills.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Outstanding achievement means that all students achieve their full potential considering their starting points. Most students continue into the sixth form, which the school calls the Further Education department. This key stage builds on the firm foundation that has been established further down the school. Higher standards were achieved in 2014 and are on a rising trend.
- Students develop their personal skills at a rapid rate. They use and apply them in a wide range of adult situations, such as cooking meals, going shopping, gardening, and working in charity shops, pilates, cycling or helping other people with special needs in other settings.
- Students' attitudes and their behaviour are outstanding. They always try their very best to meet the high expectations of all the staff. Some students are now involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- Teaching is outstanding. The students really do enjoy expressing their views and exploring their choices. For example, they learn how to reflect, ask questions, and then answer in an interview situation.
- Excellent arrangements for transition into the sixth form, for example through their 'Pathways' work, ensure students settle very quickly. These procedures are seamless and their learning journey work follows students through by tracking their many individual achievements.
- Similarly, arrangements to prepare students for their move to post-19 provision are excellent. Students integrate into their new situation, as well as experience the world of work in areas such as coffee shops, car maintenance or working with pets.
- Sixth form provision is very well led and managed by a knowledgeable and creative senior leader. All safety and welfare requirements are fully met. As a result, students are very settled, secure and confident. Teamwork is a considerable strength and has a significant impact on students' excellent achievement. Leaders acknowledge that the temporary mobile accommodation in which students are currently taught is not ideal for these students to thrive. Some have to move from one building to the next and this can impact on the students' learning. A typical comment from a member of staff was, 'The school building lets us down when meeting the needs of students who need a lot of physical care.'

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119883
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448012

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Stubbs
Headteacher	Angela Banner
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2012
Telephone number	01254 381782
Fax number	01254 396805
Email address	office@broadfield.lancs.sch.uk

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