

Bank View High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133441
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	360514
Inspection dates	08–09 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda Clare

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Pollard
Headteacher	Ian Wright
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons and two part lessons were observed. Fifteen teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents, including information on students' progress, teachers' planning, curricular documents, students' files and the school's self-evaluation. Questionnaires were received from 42 parents and carers and the inspectors also read survey responses from the students and the school staff.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether targets are sufficiently challenging for students.
- How well students' behaviour contributes to their progress.
- How well the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of different groups.
- How accurately the school monitors and evaluates its progress.
- The extent to which the school has improved outcomes and provision in post-16 education.

Information about the school

Bank View High School provides education for students who have complex learning difficulties, which includes moderate and severe learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. All students have a statement of special educational needs and boys outnumber girls by two to one. Most students are of White British origin; much smaller numbers are from other ethnic backgrounds. There is a small proportion of looked after students. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average.

The school was subject to amalgamation in 2006 and operated from two sites. It re-located to its present single site in 2009. It has achieved several awards including Investors in People, Basic Skills Awards, Dyslexia Friendly status, Healthy School status and Sportsmark Gold.

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

Bank View High is a good school which provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support for its students. This newly combined school is making rapid progress as a result of outstanding leadership and management. Relationships with parents and carers are excellent. 'Brilliant school' 'Fantastic place', 'the transformation in my child has been amazing to see' are comments representative of many received. The school's superb adherence to equality and determination to overcome barriers to learning permeate everything that it does. This results in very well-tailored responses to individual student's needs.

Students say they like school. They try hard and many show good determination to succeed. Students make good progress from low individual starting points. Their confidence as learners increases as they rise through school and by Key Stage 4, over one-third achieve results close to age-appropriate levels.

Students feel extremely safe in school. As a result of its extremely caring ethos, they know who to turn to for support and are very confident that it will be provided. Their awareness of healthy lifestyles and participation in sporting activities is outstanding. Creative art and music awareness are promoted exceptionally well. Reflection is valued. Quiet rooms and the quiet yard provide opportunities for students to sit undisturbed or to make friends. Students' attendance is above average and excellent work-related opportunities complement the acquisition of good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills very effectively. These skills prepare students extremely well for the future.

Teaching is good. Lessons are planned thoroughly and provide a good range of stimulating activities. Lesson objectives are displayed clearly but students' learning targets are not always understood or referred to sufficiently in lessons. Support staff enhance classroom practice and pastoral needs particularly well. An effective and developing curriculum contributes significantly to the good and better progress that students make. The new Additional Resources Centre (ARC) has begun to impact on students' progress, boosting learning through 'in-reach' support, such as relaxation or anger management. The curriculum for students in the Nurture room has started to develop and provides a good basis on which to further provide more discrete and specialised provision for students with autistic spectrum disorders.

The sixth form has outstanding provision. Very effective individual programmes promote independence and life-skills. The school's outstanding partnerships effectively extend learning and build students' self-confidence. These links match each student's pace as transition to adult life is very carefully managed.

The headteacher and senior management team provide outstanding direction for the school. Systems to monitor and evaluate progress are very well embedded. Strategic planning is very effective. The school knows precisely what it needs to do to develop further the re-united schools and has made much progress in achieving this. Outstanding arrangements are made by the school to secure safety. The governing body maintains a regular presence and its involvement in evaluating the progress of the school is good. As a result of the strength of leadership and the exciting developments newly introduced but not yet consolidated, the school's capacity is good and improving.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - students fully understand their learning targets
 - learning targets are used more consistently in lessons and in marking.

- Extend further the school's curricular provision and resources to meet the needs of the increasing population of students with autistic spectrum disorders.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students enter the school with low attainment due to their complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All have additional needs, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), behaviour issues and for some, gaps in the continuity of their education. In lessons, they enjoy their learning and show good interest in their subjects. They especially thrive on the variety of activities offered. As students settle into their secondary education their rate of progress increases and by the end of Key Stage 4 they achieve well. Progress is equally good in English and mathematics. Science is strong as a result of good teaching and much practical learning. A good range of courses enable all students to work towards lower level unit awards and entry level accreditation; more-able students achieve GCSE qualifications.

Very good attention is paid to the way in which students learn, recognised by one parent quoting her child: 'The way they teach me I can understand it, that's why I'm happy now.' Work is carefully matched to need and learning style in the best sessions. The school has targeted literacy as an area for improvement and introduced focused reading sessions on the timetable for every class. Together with the one-to-one tuition scheme this is having a good impact on basic literacy skills across the school. Different groups are tracked very well and make progress that is equal to or better than that of their peers. Students cared for by local authorities are monitored very closely and achieve well, as do those in the school's new Nurture group.

Students cooperate with staff, answer questions well and behaviour is generally good. Students say there is little bullying or racism in school and anything that may happen is dealt with swiftly. Merits and rewards encourage good behaviour and self-discipline is promoted strongly. Students are willing to ask for help and feel secure with staff support. Practical subjects are particularly popular and students take great care to keep safe. In a food technology lesson, students watched the teacher's demonstration with good attention. Using visual method cards and skilful staff support, they used hot stoves and frying pans very competently to make pancakes by themselves, paying meticulous attention to safety.

Students have good opportunity to mix with others in vocational, college and sister school links which develop social and personal skills very well. They take responsibilities seriously, for example, addressing the governing body directly about their Young Enterprise business ventures. Students cooperate well, support one another and know right from wrong. Assemblies celebrate achievement effectively. Students participate well in fundraising activities to support the community. International links with a school in Helsinki and overseas pen friends enable students to have excellent and meaningful understanding of cultural diversity.

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	*
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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and support staff know students very well, which contributes effectively to their good progress. Work is planned carefully and generally builds on what students have learned in previous lessons. Students apply new skills to consolidate their learning and many show their pleasure in achievement. This was clearly demonstrated by one student's knowledge and understanding of time lines in history when researching the wives of Henry VIII on the internet. His enthusiasm and pride in his work were evident as he located previous projects on the timeline where he

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low * In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

had learned of 'murder holes' and 'castle loop holes' for the archers in the middle ages. In the best lessons expectations are high, students' work is monitored well and targets present a high level of challenge. Behaviour is managed well using the school's actions and consequences guidelines. However, occasional lapses can distract others from their work. Students are involved in the assessment of their work well and select pieces for their 'Spectrum' files which record their achievements and collate their levelled pieces of work very effectively. Whilst recognising that they have individual learning targets, students do not always understand or recall them because they are not consistently referred to in lessons or in the marking of their work.

For the majority of students, the broad and balanced curriculum is subject led and enhanced well by a good range of trips and visits, and vocational and taster college courses. Increased flexibility courses present alternative education options for a small number of students, offering combinations of work-related and college access. Talented groups, particularly in arts, drama and sports, are identified and extra provision made to support them. Training to support students to confidently use public transport helps them to acquire greater independence and to develop their social skills. The small number of girls at each key stage benefit from opportunities to share social and health experiences in the girls groups run by the support staff. The curriculum is evolving to include more provision for students whose specialised needs present more challenge. The newly completed area for the Nurture group and those with autistic spectrum disorders is designed to enhance this provision significantly and provide extra space to develop further the innovations of the Additional Resource Centre.

Well-targeted support and excellent relationships underpin the school's care and guidance systems. Learning mentors focus strongly on hard-to-reach students and work to involve them directly in their education. The structured entry transition programme is very thorough. College links and taster courses start in Year 11 and very effectively provide insight for students to guide their future choices. The 'Team around the school' multi-agency groups support students very well. External support, such as physiotherapy or speech and language therapists, is welcomed. Students are provided with high-quality advice about their proposed post-16 routes.

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 clear vision and purposeful direction of the headteacher is shared by senior managers. Together they have provided very strong and effective leadership and management, and a particularly focused and well coordinated approach to ensuring excellence in equality of opportunity and individual development. They have very

effectively managed significant change as the school has moved towards its current population and location. Morale is very high and the recent staffing changes have produced an excellent combination of new and experienced staff to take the school forward. Monitoring is rigorous and the school analyses students' progress in detail. The introduction of a range of GCSE courses for small cohorts of more-able students and the wide range of individualised interventions to help less-able students to achieve their potential illustrate the range of the school's population. The quality of teaching has improved and is now at least good and rapidly improving. Challenging targets are set using high comparative predictions.

The governing body is effective and both supports and challenges the school well. Governors share their experiences and are fully involved in the school.

The school's safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Staff are checked, risks assessed and there is a clear and published structure for child protection. Policies are implemented well and include internet safety.

Engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. There are very good levels of consultation and parents and carers report their views which are taken into account by the school. Partnerships are outstanding and enhance the quality and range of provision offered by the school from business partners to college links. The promotion of community cohesion is good. Through its outreach service the school provides strong support for local schools and the wider community. Meaningful links are being developed with a school in Helsinki for pupils to have a better understanding of life outside their own country. The school provides good value for money

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The sixth form focuses very effectively on meeting the needs of students who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. From entry, students are provided with challenging targets which they achieve very well. The emphasis of the work in the sixth form is the development of personal and life skills, and the application of learning to real-life situations including the workplace. It is also an adult community

focused on independence and the development of social communication. Students appreciate the experiences and their enjoyment is reflected in their high attendance. Teaching is outstanding and is tailored to individual need, reflecting well the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all. Students develop exemplary social and personal skills through their increasing involvements off-site in college links and work-related learning placements. Information and communication technology skills develop very well. The curriculum is well supported by appropriate and relevant accreditation. Students undertake the Certificate of Personal Education (COPE) and Towards Independence awards, which recognise their small steps of progression. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The 'family' feel to post-16 provision creates a warm environment from which confidence and self-esteem grow and in which students are highly supportive of one another.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. High standards are sought and achieved in organisation, monitoring, tracking and review of student progress. Engagement with parents and carers is excellent. Safeguarding is outstanding and meets the high standards of the main school. The new voluntary service for community work has extended links with the local community very effectively.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very positive about Bank View High School. Under half of the parents responded to the questionnaire. Those responding were overwhelmingly in agreement on all aspects. The inspection findings indicated that relationships with parents and carers are outstanding, care, guidance and support is outstanding and there are no aspects identified in the report which are less than good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bank View High 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 inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 121 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	71	12	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	83	7	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	79	7	17	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	90	3	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	79	8	19	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	71	12	29	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)	27	64	10	24	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	88	4	10	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	83	5	12	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	83	6	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	90	3	7	1	2	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 is for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



March 9 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Bank View High School, Liverpool, L10 1LW

I am writing to thank you for your help last week when my colleague and I visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and this is what we found.

Your parents and carers think that Bank View High is a good school and we agree. You say that you feel safe there and you trust the staff to help you when you need it and we agree. Excellent arrangements keep you safe and everyone in school looks after you really well. You enjoy your lessons and make good progress. Behaviour is good and you really do know how to keep healthy! You attend lots of sports clubs and some of you go to healthy eating club. The teaching in your school is good and your teachers and support staff help you to learn in the way you like to learn, which helps you to make even better progress in your work. You know that you have learning targets but some of you are not sure what they mean, so I have asked your teachers to make sure that you understand by explaining them to you. I have also asked your teachers to keep reminding you so that you don't forget - and to write them in your books too, so that you can see them when your work is marked. You are very considerate towards one another and take responsibility in lots of ways such as when you raise funds to support students in a different country. You go on many visits and older pupils learn a lot from links with businesses and colleges. These will help you to meet different people, make new friends and learn about work when you leave school. We thought that your 6th form was excellent in all that it offers to those of you who may wish to have a little longer in school before you leave.

Your school is good because your headteacher and other senior managers are very good leaders and are always trying to make the school even better. I have asked them to keep improving resources such as the Nurture room so that you will have an even better school to go to. I am very pleased that Bank View High is a good school. I hope that you help your teachers to make it even better by continuing to try hard and helping them to make decisions through your school council. My very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Clare
Lead inspector

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