

Bank View High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133441
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	316124
Inspection dates	20–21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Eric Craven HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	174
School	153
Sixth form	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jan Pollard
Headteacher	Mr Ian Wright
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Sherwoods Lane Fazakerley Liverpool L10 1LW
Telephone number	0151 5253451
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2006 following the amalgamation of two special schools. It serves all parts of Liverpool and has two sites 11 miles apart. It provides for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and at least one other associated learning difficulty or disability. The population is defined as having complex learning difficulties. The profile of pupils' needs is changing as more with autistic spectrum disorder and challenging behaviour are referred to the school. All of the pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are twice as many boys than girls. About 65% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. An average proportion are from backgrounds other than White British and 17 pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority. Following the amalgamation, two pupils have remained at the school to complete the last couple of years of their primary education in accord with parental wishes. The school has achieved Investors in People, Basic Skills Award, Sports Mark Gold, Dyslexia Friendly School Charter Mark and the Healthy Schools' 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 building steadily on its pockets of outstanding practice. This concurs with the school's own assessment of its effectiveness. The headteacher and other senior managers are a cohesive team who have led the school very well through a challenging amalgamation. They are dealing very well with the demands of managing a school on two sites. It is still early days in the life of the school; but already there is a shared vision and many systems have been developed to ensure consistency across the two sites and to capitalise on the best practice from each of the two previous schools. The school recognises there is still more work to do to ensure further consistency across the school, notably in the way pupils are assessed. This work is underway.

Because the quality of teaching is consistently good and some of it outstanding pupils make at least good progress and some do better than this. Teachers know the pupils well and provide work that is matched to the needs of most of them. There is still scope for work to be better suited to some of the least able pupils. Teachers and non-teaching staff work harmoniously. Learning support officers are effective in supporting pupils in lessons and through the school's 'in-reach' programmes, providing additional support for those pupils identified as needing something extra. Learning mentors make a valuable contribution in meeting the pupils' wider needs and in their liaison with families and other agencies. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for and the vast majority enjoy the school, a view echoed overwhelmingly by the parents who returned the inspection questionnaires.

Safeguarding systems are strictly applied. Staff provide outstanding support for the pupils and give them excellent feedback. All pupils have personal targets as well as targets in their subjects. They have an excellent understanding of healthy and safe living because of the impressive work the school has done to get them to think about these issues. They willingly take up opportunities to make contributions to the school and wider afield, for example, through their charitable work. The school council is impressive and makes a positive difference, for example, it has prompted the school to introduce healthier school meals and to refurbish a shower block. The behaviour of the great majority of pupils in lessons and around the school is excellent. They are good humoured and courteous. The few pupils who do occasionally display disruptive behaviour are managed very effectively so they do not disturb the education of other pupils. They value the rewards and merits that can be earned for good behaviour and work and consequently they think about how they conduct themselves and cooperate with others. Attendance is improving and is just about satisfactory. The school is working hard to improve the attendance of those who arrive at the school having been very poor attenders at their previous schools. This is particularly problematic on the south site where the attendance of a handful of pupils is proving stubbornly difficult to shift. Pupils are being prepared well for their life after school because of the emphasis placed on life skills, literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and the world of work. The curriculum is outstanding because it meets their needs very well. It is reviewed to ensure this continues to be the case. Work is underway to develop the curriculum further in the sixth form.

Senior staff have an accurate view of the schools strengths and areas for development. Evaluations of the school's practices are regular and feed into its

school improvement plan. However, the plan does not have a sufficient focus on improving the achievements of pupils. The school uses data on individual pupils very well but recognises it needs to use this to show patterns and trends in progress for groups of pupils and at a whole-school level. The governing body is performing its role well. Governors bring relevant and valuable experiences to their roles. They are not afraid to ask searching questions of the headteacher in being a critical friend of the school. The school is poised to further capitalise on the good start it has made in the short time it has been open. It is aware of the developments still needed and its capacity to achieve them is good. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is good. The profile of the pupils is wide ranging with a small number of pupils joining at 16 years of age from other schools. Its curriculum is being developed well to meet the needs of the changing population of pupils with an increasing focus on life and vocational skills and individual curriculum programmes to meet the needs of the more vulnerable pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to spend time off-site in the community and at work and college placements. They are being prepared well for life after school. There is more to be done for the oldest pupils to help them gain more external accreditation for the work they do. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress in their time in the sixth form. The sixth form is being managed effectively on a day-to-day basis.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve attendance.
- Ensure more teaching is of the quality of the best.
- Analyse data on pupils at a whole school and group level to further inform self-evaluation and planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Because of their learning difficulties and in some cases their troubled educational histories the standards achieved by most of the pupils are below those expected of pupils of a similar age nationally. Nevertheless, in 2007 nearly 90% of pupils gained at least one GCSE pass at grade G or above and 15% gained five GCSE passes at grade G or above. Two pupils gained GCSE grade C in Art. The progress the pupils make from their starting points is good and a number make outstanding progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress in English and mathematics because the school is very aware of their needs, especially where English has not been a first language. The school tracks the progress of 'looked after' pupils very effectively. Their progress is good and in a few cases they have made extremely good progress in reading because of the additional support the school has provided. The two pupils in the primary class are making excellent progress because of the exceptionally high level of resource dedicated to them during the transition to the closure of the unit and the focused planning which is well geared to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of the pupils is outstanding. The atmosphere in the school is very upbeat because of first class relationships between everyone at the school. Pupils develop good attitudes to learning and this contributes to the good progress they make. They like to be involved in the life of the school. They raise money for a range of charitable causes and are currently sponsoring the education of a child in the Philippines. This helps to give them a good insight into the needs of children from other cultures. Some older pupils provide very good role models. A good example was seen when a sixth-former ran an excellent dance class at break-time for other pupils. Members of the school council have given presentations to the governing body and have been successful in securing funding for the development of leisure activities. The moral and social development of the pupils is outstanding. They respond well to the school's system for managing behaviour. They develop particularly good social skills because they are given plenty of opportunities to work collectively and collaboratively with each other and they take a lead from staff in showing concern for their peers. Their spiritual and cultural development is also outstanding because of the emphasis the school gives to this work, which is aided by the good range of visitors to the school and visits made by pupils to places in the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good but, nevertheless, it is variable. There are some pockets of outstanding teaching which bring lessons to life, give a vibrancy and urgency to learning and enthuse the pupils. There are also some lessons that are satisfactory. Where learning is most pronounced the key features are: excellent teamwork between members of staff; pupils given plenty of opportunities to work collaboratively with each other and also independently of the teacher; pupils making choices; very good use of interactive whiteboards to interest and engage pupils; and work being well planned so that it is challenging yet achievable. Not all lessons are like this but in most lessons pupils enjoy the work given to them, there is good humour and there are high expectations of behaviour.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1**Sixth Form Grade: 2**

The curriculum is outstanding. It has been carefully thought through to build on the prior knowledge and experience of the pupils. It is used flexibly to meet the needs of all pupils and includes work experience, college placements and the practising of independence skills in the local community. The impact of these experiences on pupils' social and emotional development is very positive. There is a suitable emphasis on external qualifications for pupils although the school is working to further develop this for some of the older pupils in the sixth form. The number of GCSE courses on offer on the south site has been increased to bring it in to line with the north site and to ensure an equal entitlement for pupils. Gifted and talented

pupils are identified and provided with a range of activities in line with their abilities. This is done well in partnership with a variety of external providers including Hope University. There is a wide range of enrichment activities on offer, including several valuable residential experiences organised each year. These add significantly to the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Corridor and classroom displays on the north site are extremely good. They clearly demonstrate and celebrate pupils' work as well as providing helpful guidance. This excellent practice is being shared with the south site to encourage a common approach to the school environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The exceptional care provided by staff is a key to the positive atmosphere in the school and the pupils' enjoyment of their education. Staff are keen to involve other people who can make a valuable contribution to the pupils' development. These include a visiting school nurse and community police officer. The systems for managing individual education plans and annual reviews are very good and ensure pupils and parents can make their contributions. Those pupils with additional needs have these met well through the school 'in-reach' intervention programmes and the use of other relevant agencies. Pupils benefit from having targets because they understand they are their priorities and they are involved in compiling and reviewing them. The guidance they receive ensures that post school provision is well suited to their needs, be that at college or elsewhere.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is tenacious and successful in his efforts to ensure that Bank View is one school on two sites and not two schools. He is well supported by a closely-knit team of senior staff. The school has effective systems for evaluating and monitoring itself. The quality of teaching, for example, is monitored well and results in points for development being shared with staff. The system of performance management is well in place and this too contributes to the development of teaching and learning. The difficulty of having two school sites 11 miles apart is seen in the management of the curriculum where there are two coordinators for each subject. However, the school has suitably managed this by having a senior member of staff with oversight of each subject area. Governors are encouraged to be integrally involved in the school, for example, they receive invitations to attend staff training days. The information they receive from the school is helpful and comprehensive although more information could be provided for them about the progress being made by pupils.

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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	16–19
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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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	NA	
The effectiveness of boarding provision	NA	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
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	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Bank View High School, Liverpool L10 1LW

On behalf of the team of inspectors, I would like to thank you for making our two days at your school so enjoyable. It was a pleasure to meet with you and to hear the views of your representatives from the school council. We greatly valued what you had to say.

Bank View High is a good school and some of the work it does with you is excellent. It was clear to us that you are making good progress and are developing into sensible and mature young people. The great majority of you behave extremely well and you concentrate and enjoy your lessons. We found that teaching was good and, in some cases, it was even better than this. We particularly liked the way you were helped to work together on things, sometimes without the support of the teacher. For those of you who do need extra help from learning support officers or learning mentors we judged this support good as well. Staff really do care for you. They do all they can to keep you safe. It was pleasing that you told us that you all had an adult you could turn to if you had a worry or a problem. Almost all of your parents and carers agreed that you are well looked after and enjoy the school. When we looked at information about your attendance, we found it to be just about satisfactory. We are concerned about the attendance of some pupils and we would ask you to make every effort to get to school every day because if you are not there you simply cannot learn. We think that you are taught the right things to help you become as independent as possible and so that you have choices when you come to leave school. Although most of you gain external awards, we do think that all of you could be helped to get recognition like this. Your school is well led and managed by the headteacher and other senior staff. It is difficult to manage a school on two sites that are so far apart but we think they are doing well. The teachers have good information about the progress you are each making and this helps them to plan work for you. We think that the school could use this information even more if it was put together so that the staff could see the information for the whole school at once and for groups of pupils as well as individuals.

The things we have asked Mr Wright and the governors to do that will make your school even better is first, to improve attendance. Second, we would like to see more lessons like the very best ones we saw where you were very enthusiastic about your learning. Finally, we would like the school to make even more use of the information it has on your achievements.

Thank you once again and you have my very good wishes for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Eric Craven
Her Majesty's Inspector