

Inspection of an outstanding school: Tor View School

Clod Lane, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6LR

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Outcome

Tor View School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to Tor View School. They told us how proud they are to be part of an exciting and engaging learning community. Staff have an exceptional understanding of each pupil in their care. They have very high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development.

Sometimes, due to their underlying special educational needs and disabilities, pupils struggle to communicate how they are feeling. This can lead to them exhibiting challenging behaviour. Staff understand the tell-tale signs that indicate that pupils are feeling frustrated. Adults help pupils to manage their own feelings and to make positive choices so that learning is not disrupted. This is especially the case in the intensive support centre.

Pupils say that there is no bullying in school. They are effusive in their praise for staff because they know that staff care for their well-being. All of the pupils we spoke to said that this is why they feel safe in school.

Staff celebrate pupils' differences and talents. Pupils and students in the sixth form have a range of opportunities to practise the skills that might help them to gain employment in the future.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils' learning. They are relentless in their drive to continually improve the school. They have ensured that the school's curriculum is well designed so that it meets the varied needs of the pupils. Leaders are helping to reduce workload so that teachers can focus on delivering the planned curriculum. They do so exceptionally well.

Teachers design tasks that are precisely matched to pupils' needs to build on their prior learning. This is done for children in the early years right up to students in the sixth form.

This consistent approach forms the basis of the schools' considerable success. Teachers set goals for pupils that are challenging and ensure that pupils make strong progress towards fulfilling these targets.

English and mathematics key skills are taught at the start of every day. These are interwoven throughout the learning that takes place during the day. This forms a 'golden thread' throughout every lesson. In each subject, leaders have a clear overview of the steps in learning that pupils need to make to achieve well in each subject.

In reading, teachers set high expectations for pupils by matching their targets to these curriculum aims. This is clearly visible in lessons. For example, some Reception children work on making sounds while others work on recognising and naming pictures to develop their early communication skills. For pupils who are not on track in their language and communication work, extra support is put in place to make sure they meet their targets.

Leaders have mapped out an ambitious mathematics curriculum across all key stages, including early years. The curriculum is designed to build on pupils' prior learning, such as in key stage 3, where we saw pupils finding one quarter of an amount by halving and halving again. All staff understand what they want pupils to know and remember by the end of each topic and year group. The tasks they choose to deliver the curriculum are demanding. Teachers place learning in to real life contexts to bring pupils' learning alive. For example, sixth-form students told us about their trip to Bury market, where they worked out how much money they could save on discounted items.

At the end of key stage 4, pupils are successful at achieving functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Students in the sixth form study a range of skills qualifications for further learning and employment. However, leaders place no limits on pupils' achievement and in the past pupils and students have studied up to GCSE level in some subjects. The effective careers advice and guidance that they receive focuses on realistic aspirations and skills for independent living.

Pupils' work in art and drama shows that leaders have the same high expectations of pupils across all curriculum areas. In their drama work, pupils develop their confidence, social skills and performance skills to act in front of an audience. This is extended further in the sixth form, where students produce plays and films through their own theatre company, 'Face Me'. Here they focus on educating others about what it is like to live with a disability. In art, the curriculum builds pupils' knowledge and skills well. For example, printing in Year 2 encourages pupils to use their sense of touch, while secondary-aged pupils discuss the use of paint in works of art such as Van Gogh's 'Starry Night'. The strengths in the design of the curriculum and in the setting of pupils' individual targets are reflected in all curriculum areas.

Leaders' ambition, however, knows no bounds. Each faculty has planned a range of activities to cater for pupils' wider development. There is a strong element of developing pupils' personal skills throughout all aspects of learning. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties use assistive technology so that they can express choices and make decisions. Some key stage 4 pupils develop their confidence by performing in a rock band. In addition, some pupils are taught at the local primary and secondary schools to

experience a mainstream setting, while sixth-form students work in the school's café. No matter what context, this is a school that encourages and empowers pupils to shine.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know the pupils in their care exceptionally well. They are well placed to recognise any change of behaviour, particularly for pupils who cannot express themselves verbally. All staff and governors receive regular and comprehensive training for safeguarding. Safeguarding is prioritised by leaders and governors who keep their systems and processes under continual review. Leaders are constantly improving their practice. The pupils that spoke to us knew how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online.

Background

When we have judged a special school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Tor View Specialist Learning Community, to be outstanding on 4–5 December 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, ['disadvantaged pupils'](#) refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143879
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10110973
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	35
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mrs Clare Mulderrig
Headteacher	Ms Angela Holdsworth (Executive headteacher) Mrs Louise Parish (headteacher)
Website	http://torview.org/
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to severe and complex learning difficulties, including profound and multiple learning difficulties. Throughout the school several pupils have additional needs arising from physical disabilities and sensory impairments.
- The school has specialist provision for up to 15 young people with autistic spectrum conditions who have difficulty regulating their behaviour.
- The school does not use any alternative provision, although a number of pupils attend Haslingden Primary School or Haslingden High School for part of their school week for inclusion.

- Tor View School converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2017. When its predecessor school, Tor View Specialist Learning Community, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection we met with the executive headteacher, headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders throughout the inspection. We also spoke to governors, trustees and other school staff.
- We spoke with a representative from Lancashire local authority regarding the placement of pupils at the school.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading and early communication, mathematics, art and drama. For these subjects we spoke with senior leaders, met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, undertook an analysis of pupils' work and visited lessons. We heard pupils read as part of their classwork and individually, including students in the sixth form.
- We also spoke to leaders, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils and students in the sixth form about their work across the curriculum. We also discussed the careers education and pathways for pupils in the sixth form to access employment and their preparation for independent living.
- We met with groups of pupils from across the school both to ask them about safeguarding. We reviewed documentation which included the school's safeguarding policy, register of the checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, teachers and senior leaders.
- We took account of 62 responses to the Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and the 63 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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