

Tor View School

Clod Lane, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 6LR

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- School leaders are totally focused on developing outstanding teaching and learning opportunities for pupils and staff. As a result, staff have excellent training to meet the complex needs of the pupils and ensure they make progress.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils make exceptional progress from their individual starting points across all the key stages. They make significant progress in improving their reading, writing, and communication and mathematics skills during their key skills lessons as well as in other subjects.
- Teachers, and other adults in the class, are highly skilled at understanding and meeting the needs of the pupils. Pupils' individual targets are challenging and broken down into small steps so that all progress is evident.
- The wide range of developmental activities, inside and outside school hours, gives pupils and parents excellent support to manage the complex difficulties they face and prepare for their future.
- The pupils in the further education department have excellent resources to develop their independence and relish the opportunities available.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are very keen to attend school and take advantage of the activities outside school hours.
- Staff have excellent skills in managing pupils' behaviour through the positive relationships they develop and by having high expectations. Pupils respond positively and get on well together.
- All pupils take part in a variety of physical and sensory activities to develop their physical skills and well-being. All pupils are involved in the Christmas performance at some level and this reflects the outstanding teamwork that is apparent across the whole school.
- High quality partnerships exist with other educational providers to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement even further.
- The mission statement: 'Together we inspire, learn, enjoy and achieve' is shared by staff and governors due to the passion and commitment of the Principal and headteacher. As a result, there is a harmonious staff team totally committed to continuous school development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, two jointly with the headteacher. Four additional learning activities were visited with the Principal; another seven lessons were visited with the headteacher; and pupils being taught off-site were visited. Inspectors observed lunchtime activities and observed pupils' behaviour at playtime, before and after school, and as they moved about the school. A range of pupils' responses to learning, from sensory reactions to written evidence, was also examined.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils in Key Stage 4 in order to gather their views about the school and inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school. One inspector listened to pupils reading individually.
- Pupils' communication ability, including the development of early reading skills, was observed across all key stages. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the young people in the further education department were seen practising communication skills in many different situations and using a range of additional communication systems, such as knee-pad activated 'voice' responses.
- Meetings were held with the Principal and headteacher and other members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View); 70 questionnaires completed by staff; three written responses from pupils and one from an autism adviser who recently assessed the school.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation including information on pupils' progress and attainment and ways in which these are tracked and monitored; teachers' assessment and planning; the school's self-evaluation and development plans; a range of policies and procedures relating to the management of staff performance. The inspectors took account of the school's procedures for safeguarding as well as records relating to attendance and behaviour. Governing body documentation, including the headteacher's report to the governing body, and the school's website were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Christina McIntosh, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Drew Crawshaw

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tor View is a generic learning disabilities school that provides education for pupils aged 3–19 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 intensive support centre accommodates up to 10 young people with autistic spectrum conditions and challenging behaviour.
- The school has recently moved its further education department to a site close to the school. Twenty two Tor View pupils attend Haslingden Primary School, Haslingden High School or Accrington and Rossendale College for part of their school week and some pupils from other mainstream schools join Tor View to access their resources.
- Pupils are mainly drawn from the Rossendale area but also from further afield including neighbouring local authorities. The majority of pupils join the school at Reception and Year 7 and most stay on into the further education provision.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British backgrounds with a small proportion of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage pupils.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, (additional funding allocated by the government for certain groups of pupils, in this case, those who are eligible for free school meals and who are looked after by the local authority) is well above the national average.
- Since its last inspection the school has achieved Artsmark Gold, Quality in Study Support (Advanced), National Support School Status, Financial Management Standard in Schools and is at the final stage of accreditation for Leading Parent Partnership Award and with the National Autistic Society.
- Tor View was accredited as a National Teaching School in March 2013.
- The Principal is a national leader of education and the headteacher and two other senior staff are specialist leaders of education. Recent changes to the leadership structure have involved internal promotions and more delegated leadership as a result of the Teaching School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the information technology provision across the school to:
 - enable staff to use the most up-to-date technology to provide stimulus and challenge in lessons
 - improve the website so it is more user-friendly for pupils and parents.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All pupils enter the school with skills which are well below those typical for others of their age. They make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points both in the subjects they study and in relation to their physical, communication and behaviour development.
- Staff are secure about the levels of attainment on entry to the school as they work with colleagues in other similar schools to ensure consistency.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding due to the excellent understanding teachers, and other adults in the class, have about how to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils' individual targets are challenging and broken down into small steps so that all progress, however small, is evident.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage pupils make good progress due to the systematic monitoring of the small steps of progress by knowledgeable staff who model expectations well.
- The school uses the Progression Guidance 2011 and the Lancashire Pupil Achievement Project to assess the pupils' rate of progress. The comparison with pupils of similar ability levels shows the pupils at Tor View make outstanding progress in all key stages. All pupils make expected progress in English and mathematics and many exceed expected progress and this trend has risen over the past three years.
- This rising trend in pupil progress rates is a result of improved teaching and the improved tracking and monitoring systems. The school developed its own tracking of very small steps of progress, where no other system exists, in response to the previous Ofsted report. This has resulted in a sharper focus on smaller targets being set to move pupils on.
- Close monitoring of progress enables appropriate interventions to be put in place when any pupil falls below expected progress. For example, girls' performance in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 was recognised as needing extra support, so booster classes are running to address this concern.
- Staff are highly skilled in using alternative forms of communication and as a result, pupils have become more confident communicators. Sensory stimulation is used exceptionally well across the school to encourage pupils' response to learning. Well-rehearsed routines and the use of signs and symbols all help pupils understand what is expected of them.
- Reading is developed effectively and supported well by the use of phonics (the understanding of letters and their sounds). Many pupils enjoy reading at school and show pride in their ability.
- Literacy and mathematics skills, including emergent and early cognition skills, are well developed during the key skills lessons every day when pupils work on their individual targets to ensure rapid and sustained progress.
- All pupils progress at an outstanding rate, including the most able, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds: this is because of the individual approach to meeting all pupils' varying and complex needs, which, in turn, ensures equality of opportunity for all. For example: pupils who show a particular talent are stretched through inclusion in mainstream schools which accelerates learning and improves social skills. Last year, one pupil gained A–C grade GCSEs in science, mathematics and ICT as a result of this opportunity.
- There has been a significant narrowing of the progress gap between pupils entitled to the pupil premium and others over the past three years due to focused interventions in English. Mathematics interventions are in place to further reduce the gap in mathematics.
- The planning for the use of the new funding to promote sport and fitness has been carefully targeted to expand opportunities in swimming, specialist teaching, increasing after-school clubs and having an athletics' festival.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their lives due to the improved resources and increased opportunities given in the further education department. This has resulted in fewer pupils leaving school and then not accessing education, employment or training.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers are skilled at meeting the academic and personal needs of the pupils and are rigorous in finding solutions to any barriers to learning the pupils may have. This enables pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Teachers plan carefully, they know their pupils exceptionally well and take individual needs into account. They work closely with teaching assistants to create an extremely effective team. For example, in one lesson adults were seen using the sound of coins in a container and the texture of money to develop a sensory understanding of money. A shop environment was created by other adults to enable pupils to understand the concept of exchanging items for money and encouraging independent choice. Pupils' medical and sensory needs were sensitively met throughout the lesson without disrupting the learning and progress being made by all pupils.
- Teachers check progress regularly throughout lessons and swiftly adapt their teaching to move pupils on quickly. In the best lessons teaching assistants worked effectively and independently as a result of prior planning with the teacher. As a result, pupils rarely had to wait for the next step of learning and remained engaged and motivated.
- Outstanding lessons were those which linked the learning to real life and included a level of challenge for all pupils. This was evidenced by young people making soup in a commercial kitchen; cutting back vegetation in the garden; making the props and scenery for the school production; and using augmented communication to develop self-control by wheelchair users in a dance lesson.
- Pupils are regularly and skilfully questioned to test their understanding and pupils are encouraged to assess their own progress and celebrate the progress of others which fosters a positive attitude to learning.
- Resources in lessons are used well; however, teachers say that information technology is not always easily accessible which means opportunities are sometimes lost to provide extra stimulus and challenge in lessons.
- Training is an integral part of the school for adults as well as pupils. Teaching staff regularly develop their skills through research, training, coaching and supporting each other. As a result, they model a thirst for knowledge, skills and understanding for their pupils.
- Pupils' workbooks reflect the excellent progress individual pupils make over time.
- Parents strongly believe their children are making good progress and are taught well, however, some would also like more suitable learning activities for pupils to be able to do at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Excellent relationships are evident throughout the school. Pupils benefit from very high quality interactions with adults, which help them to develop their self-image, confidence, communication and ability to cope with change.
- Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning which is reflected in lessons, on and off-site, where they want to learn and take part. They are keen to take responsibility and work independently where possible. Pupils were proud to read aloud and show visitors their work.
- Behaviour outside the classroom was exemplary. Pupils are keen to take part in activities and the lunchtime clubs. Pupils taking part in the school play were engaged and very enthusiastic during their rehearsals.
- Parents commented on the improvements they have seen in their children's behaviour at home as a result of attending Tor View. For example, one parent said: 'My girl comes home singing every day – she does that because she's happy. I've seen a massive difference – she smiles, talks to people – she enjoys herself and feels safe in school.'
- Attendance is outstanding. It is much higher than similar schools and is close to the national average for mainstream schools. Staff work hard to improve attendance for all pupils and the number of pupils with 95% attendance has improved which reflects the pupils' positive attitude to school.

- Pupils are willing to introduce themselves, shake hands and show respect and courtesy towards visitors. They take a pride in the school and enjoy taking responsibility around the school: for example one pupil was learning to work on the school switchboard and handled calls politely and efficiently.
- The school has a wealth of information relating to the behaviour and safety of pupils. Although there is regular analysis of the data this could be done more efficiently if the data was more coherently managed.
- Pupils say the school is a safe place to be and they get along well together. They know about the different kinds of bullying and the importance of e-safety.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the rich variety of activities during the school day and beyond. The school's 'Face Me' theatre company opened the Lancashire Single Equalities Conference this term with their performance about facing disability. Their aim is to share their stories with the wider community and have an impact on leaders of different services in the area.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The vision and passion to develop an outstanding school has enabled the highly effective Principal and headteacher to lead this school through many changes since the last inspection. They have ensured that all the changes have worked to the benefit of the pupils in the school. They respond positively to constructive comments and are fully aware of the strengths of the school and the areas for development. This is evident in the comprehensive self-evaluation and development plans which are shared with the governing body.
- The use of assessment, target-setting and tracking progress has been further developed since the last inspection and has strengthened teachers' skills and pupils' progress; another excellent development is the key skills lessons which focus on individual pupil's targets to support literacy and numeracy and has resulted in pupils being able to use their emerging skills effectively.
- Training staff to better meet the needs of the pupils is central to the success of the school. The school is held in high regard by parents who see the impact on their children; and by the local authority that sees the impact of the school on other educational establishments. The school is well known for developing future leaders of other special schools. Staff say they are proud to be part of Tor View and appreciate the support and challenge they are given to be the best they can for the pupils.
- Systematic tracking over time of pupil destinations when they leave Tor View has influenced the development of the further education department and the emphasis on developing life and work skills. Despite the shortage of job opportunities in the area the school has developed the post-19 opportunities by working closely with local employers and by employing ex-pupils when opportunities arise. The number of ex-Tor View pupils not in education, employment or training at 16–19 has reduced. This is not necessarily the case for post-19 and as a result, the school is working closely with Accrington & Rossendale College to develop a post-19 College offer based at the school that reflects the long-term care and commitment to the pupils by the school.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and highly relevant, building pupils' skills systematically and ensuring that their interest, confidence and motivation set them up for their next stage of learning. An excellent range of clubs, activities after-school, at weekends and during the holidays promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Parental links are strong. The school provides information on autistic spectrum conditions and social care legislation and support through social events and respite opportunities. This high quality of support is appreciated and reflected in the high parent/carer attendance at school events including annual reviews.
- The local authority knows the school well and offers a light touch, but effective approach to continuing improvements in this outstanding school.
- The changes to the leadership and management team have been made to ensure the school is highly focused on pupil progress and high quality teaching as new roles and responsibilities

emerge from the Teaching School status.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are passionate about the school and are deeply committed to improving it even further while being mindful of the pressures on the staff at the school. They work effectively with the senior leaders, staff, parents, pupils, the local authority and other partners to create opportunities for continuous development. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and plans for future improvements as well as being clear about their own development needs. They undertake regular training to enable them to check the work of the school effectively. They challenge the senior leaders by asking relevant questions and support by ensuring that financial management is secure. Governors know how the pupil premium has been spent and its impact and have ensured there is a suitable link between pay and the quality of teaching. They know they must check on the impact of the sports funding and monitor how this is being spent. The governing body effectively forms part of the leadership team and has provided strong support during the move to National Teaching School by agreeing to a more delegated strategic leadership in the school. Governors are fully aware of the benefits this status will have on the school and the opportunities for the pupils and staff.

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	119891
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	427160

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P Sweetmore
Principal	Andrew Squire
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2008
Telephone number	01706 214640
Fax number	01706 215797
Email address	office@torview.lancs.sch.uk

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