

Bank View High School

Sherwoods Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside, L10 1LW

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Bank View is a very happy school where students grow in confidence and flourish.
- Teaching enables each student to learn highly effectively. A high proportion of the teaching is outstanding and none is less than good.
- As a result students of all abilities, including those who are most able, those who receive additional funding and those from minority ethnic groups all achieve equally well.
- Students make remarkable progress in their reading, writing and speaking skills and in their use and understanding of mathematical concepts for everyday life.
- Students in the sixth form continue to make outstanding progress. They develop their independence and life skills and are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives.
- Student behaviour is outstanding. They enjoy lessons and are keen to learn. Students develop their self-esteem and feel able to express their views and opinions because they feel safe and secure.
- Students enjoy excellent supportive and mutually respectful relationships with staff. This helps them to make great strides in their personal and social development.
- The very experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher lead a team of highly committed staff who are proud to work at the school.
- All staff, including senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants know exactly how well each student is progressing. They continually check on how well students are learning and help them know how to improve their work.
- Governors provide an excellent level of support and challenge to hold senior leaders to account.
- Everyone at the school shares an enthusiasm to keep making the school better and are looking forward to moving to its new site next year.

Information about this inspection

- Parts of 16 lessons were observed, each taught by a different teacher. Three of the observations were undertaken jointly with members of the senior management team.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, with five members of the governing body, the school improvement partner and with a group of students.
- Informal discussions were held with staff and students around the school.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection took into account the 12 responses on Parent View (the on-line questionnaire) as well as results from the school's own survey of parents and students. Inspectors also viewed feedback surveys from mainstream schools who receive outreach support from Bank View.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents, including students' Spectrum files, which include records of their work and achievements during their time in school, records of students' progress over time, behaviour reports, checks on teaching, reports to the governing body on subject development and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bank View caters for students who have complex learning difficulties. These are classified as moderate learning difficulties plus another disability or special educational need, including autism spectrum conditions, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, sensory impairment, specific learning difficulties, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and medical conditions. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students who have autism spectrum conditions has increased rapidly since the previous inspection. The school holds Autism Accreditation status awarded by the National Autistic Society.
- Most students are White British. A very small number come from homes where English is an additional language but have good levels of English when they arrive at the school.
- Over half of students are eligible for the pupil premium which is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals or for children who are looked after by the local authority. This is well above the national average.
- All Year 7 pupils benefit from additional funding in the catch-up programme.
- Year 11 students attend Knowsley Community College or Basetech for half a day a week.
- The school runs an outreach service on behalf of the local authority to support pupils with special educational needs and give advice to their mainstream schools.
- The school is due to move into new build premises in September 2015. The headteacher retires at the end of this term and other senior leaders have indicated they will be retiring in the next twelve months. The deputy headteacher will take up post as acting headteacher while the governing body seeks to appoint a new headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure leadership and management remains strong and meets the needs of the school into the future by:
 - continuing to develop the skills of middle leaders
 - ensuring staff continue to be professionally developed to meet the increasingly complex needs of the students being admitted to the school
 - over-seeing the new build to be sure it provides an appropriate environment for the students and that facilities are used effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students' achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. Students have low and many have very low attainment when they enter the school because of their complex disabilities and special educational needs. From these low starting points students make rapid progress in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics so that by the time they leave many students are able to achieve close to age-appropriate levels in a range of subjects.
- Students in the sixth form also achieve very well. The subjects they follow have been reviewed to ensure they meet their needs and interests well and prepare them for their future lives. For instance, they use their numeracy skills to estimate the weight of fruit and then check it on digital scales. They learn how to use different types of scales and can use this skill when they go into the community to shop for food which they then enjoy preparing and eating, using their reading skills to follow recipes and instructions.
- All students achieve nationally recognised qualifications at age 16 or in the sixth form. They are very well-prepared for their future with the majority moving to vocational courses at local colleges. Students get ready for their move on from school by attending taster courses at college on a regular basis, by undertaking work-experience placements and by following work-related learning courses.
- All students have an equal opportunity to succeed. The large proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, the small number from minority ethnic groups and those who are looked-after children, all achieve as well as and sometimes better than their peers. Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is used very well to provide additional support to eligible students, particularly to help them settle into school and to develop their basic skills from low starting points.
- Senior leaders have been very successful at ensuring there is no gap in the achievement of different groups because each individual student has their needs exceptionally well assessed on entry and then checked frequently to make sure they are not falling behind or failing to make the progress expected of them.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know their students well and ensure that work is challenging for the most able. Those of lower ability also enjoy success through well-tailored programmes and by highly-effective support from teaching assistants. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson, students demonstrated an understanding of fractions at different ability levels through activities ranging from the most able making mental calculations using their knowledge of tables to lower ability students counting out objects into hoops.
- Where students are not making the progress expected of them this is very quickly identified and action taken in class or through additional individual or group sessions provided by staff in the ARC (additional resource centre).

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching has risen yet further since the previous inspection. Teaching is never less than good. This has resulted in students' strong progress and improved achievement over time.
- Strong teaching of communication and social skills ensures students make excellent progress in these areas and provide a firm foundation for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers are highly skilled at matching work to the needs and abilities of students to help them learn new things. They base learning on topics which are of interest to students, so that they want to learn. For example, in a science lesson, Year 7 students had chosen to develop their understanding of forces by designing and making balloon-powered cars. They were fascinated by the topic and with excellent questioning by the teacher and support from the teaching assistants to help them develop their ideas, came up with many different solutions to make their structures work.

- Class groups are of mixed ability, types of disability and special educational needs and teaching ensures everyone is included by using visual materials, sensory programmes and real objects so that all students can understand the purpose of what they are learning and can link it to real life.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work as highly effective teams in classrooms. They have a very clear, shared view of what each student is expected to learn in the lesson and ensure students are clear about what they are to achieve. They check students' learning continually and build on this in next lessons.
- All students know their English, mathematics and a social development target. They are encouraged to self-evaluate their progress towards these targets in every lesson and evaluate each other's contributions.
- Teaching in the sixth form builds exceptionally well on the excellent start students have made in the main school. Here, students learn how to look after themselves, manage their money and prepare for independent living and life in the workplace. Staff help students to be ambitious and to develop clear ideas about their futures so that placements when they leave are usually very successful.
- Teaching assistants make a hugely strong contribution to students' learning across the school. Relationships are strong and assistants support students to be successful learners exceptionally well by finding out their strengths and interests and building on these to help them learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Many arrive at the school with low levels of confidence and self-esteem but the excellent preparation for admission ensures they settle quickly and begin to learn and develop.
- Lessons are calm because students want to learn and are keen to show what they can do. They work hard because they enjoy their activities. They say that the best thing about school is 'the teachers and teaching assistants' and it is clear that the strong relationships support learning exceptionally well.
- Any behavioural incidents arising from students' disabilities and special educational needs are dealt with through a well understood and consistent behaviour management policy and procedures. Students know they can go to the ARC on request or speak to one of the learning mentors or any member of staff if they are having difficulties. The strong emphasis on helping students develop their communication and social skills helps them to be able to express their worries at an early stage so that problems can be resolved quickly.
- Over time, students make excellent progress in learning how to manage their own behaviour and by the time they leave, students are kind, caring and thoughtful young people. This was seen in an assembly where they gave remarkably insightful answers to questions linked to failure in the World Cup. Many older students were able to recognise that they could learn to succeed through failures and give examples from their own experiences.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Parents know that their children are safe in school and that trips out are carefully risk-assessed. Students say they feel safe and happy in school and are confident staff will deal with any problems. They have an excellent understanding of bullying in all its forms and can talk knowledgeably about safe behaviour on the internet and in other situations.
- The school works with other agencies to provide workshops at parent coffee mornings on issues such as e-safety, autism and behaviour, and relationships.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally strong. Students enjoy many trips out into the community including residential visits, putting on performances of drama and singing and enjoy a huge range of lunchtime and after-school clubs such as library club, girls' group, judo with a neighbouring school, diversity club and eco-club. Students in the sixth form are working towards Duke of Edinburgh awards, with some already having achieved the Bronze award and progressing very well towards their Silver award.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have led Bank View over many years highly successfully. They have lost none of their enthusiasm in developing new ideas and taking actions to continually improve the provision for the students. Under their excellent leadership, the school has moved from good to outstanding.
- Topics learned are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the increasingly complex needs of the students. As far as possible, students are consulted about what they would like to learn. Students enjoy moving onto the sixth form to develop their independence and life skills for the world of work.
- The impact of teaching on learning is checked frequently by senior leaders and record keeping, by the deputy headteacher on the progress of individual and groups of students, is exemplary. Middle leaders keep frequent checks and detailed action plans on their own subjects and are developing their skills in checking on teaching across the school. A whole-school approach to assessing students' progress and sharing observations of achievements ensures all staff share a common knowledge of students' targets and their next steps.
- Teachers and teaching assistants enjoy a programme of professional development to meet changing needs and their work with students with autism has been recognised by the achievement of National Autistic Society accreditation. Teachers and teaching assistants share the knowledge and skills they gain on courses and model best practice to each other.
- The outreach team provides highly-valued support to mainstream schools, working both with individuals and groups of pupils and with staff to improve the provision locally.
- Strong partnerships with students' families contribute very effectively to students' learning. Parents know there is an open-door policy or that they can ring up for help and advice. The learning mentors support parents to attend appointments where necessary. This work is further enhanced by the excellent links the school enjoys with other agencies.
- The local authority holds the school in high regard. It provides light touch support and planning for a new school build has involved joint working.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide extremely good support and challenge to senior and middle leaders. All governors have a link into school so that they are well informed about the day-to-day work in order to influence development planning. They carry out their safeguarding duties rigorously. Governors check any requests for pay increases are linked to a high level of performance. They check that any additional government funding is spent appropriately and is closing gaps effectively. At present, the governing body is very involved in planning for the new build and for changes in the school's leadership and have set very high standards to ensure the school continues to move forward.

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	133441
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	439474

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	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Sibbald
Headteacher	Ian Wright
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2011
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