

Inspection of Rawtenstall Cribden House Community Special School

Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6RX

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their happy, welcoming school. From the moment that they arrive each morning, they know that their day will be filled with exciting opportunities to learn. All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They face considerable barriers to their learning and development. The school helps them to approach these challenges with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils blossom, thrive and succeed through the excellent education that they receive.

The school has the highest expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils know how to complete tasks because staff explain things very clearly. If pupils need extra help, staff provide it readily. From the early years to Year 6, pupils achieve extremely well from their varied starting points.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They understand the school rules and follow them consistently. Some pupils join the school having experienced difficulties with school life in the past. These pupils settle in quickly and learn to regulate their own behaviour incredibly well.

The school provides pupils with a wonderful programme of activities to enhance their personal development. Many of these activities are carefully designed to support pupils' learning of the curriculum. For example, pupils gather and identify wildflowers and creatures in the school's woodland areas. They participate in sports competitions and write poetry for publication in books. The school prepares pupils well for secondary school when the time comes.

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

Pupils experience the very best education at this school. No stone is left unturned in supporting pupils to learn and to be as well prepared as possible for future life.

The school has created an exciting curriculum that fires pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Following the previous inspection, which highlighted weaknesses in a small number of subjects, the school acted quickly and decisively to address these issues. As a result, the curriculum is now even broader and contains the essential knowledge that the school wants pupils to learn in every subject from the early years through to Year 6. The curriculum takes full account of pupils' wide-ranging SEND. Key concepts have been broken down into small steps that pupils learn in a logical order. This ensures that pupils expand and deepen their knowledge over time. Pupils achieve consistently well in the range of subjects that they study, regardless of their starting points.

Staff follow the curriculum closely when they design learning for pupils. They use their strong subject knowledge to adapt their teaching to suit pupils' individual learning needs. Staff check carefully in lessons to make sure that pupils understand the knowledge that they are learning. This enables any misconceptions to be identified and corrected quickly.

The school has put the development of pupils' communication, language and reading at the heart of the curriculum. Staff in the early years sensitively use their expertise to support children's language development. For example, they use simple words and phrases to enable children to participate in conversation. Older pupils develop the confidence to share their thoughts and views in lessons. This prepares pupils well for life beyond primary school.

As soon as it is appropriate, children in the Reception Year begin to learn the phonics programme. Staff ensure that children's reading books are matched to the letters and sounds that they have learned. This helps them to read with confidence. Older pupils at the early stage of reading receive highly effective support to help them to overcome gaps in their reading knowledge. Pupils of all ages enjoy a wide range of stories and books.

Although all pupils at the school have SEND, any additional needs are quickly identified once pupils are admitted. The school communicates regularly and effectively with professionals such as psychologists and therapists. It ensures that pupils receive any additional support that they need to learn the curriculum well.

Pupils benefit from strong and encouraging relationships with staff. Staff at all levels ensure that pupils feel secure and ready to learn. Staff combine kindness with firmness to set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils strive to live up to these high expectations in and around school each day. Their exemplary behaviour in lessons helps everyone to get on with learning.

The school seizes every opportunity to broaden pupils' experiences beyond the academic curriculum. For example, the school supports pupils to recognise stereotypical views when they learn about gender, faith or culture. Pupils contribute to their local community by providing useful information about autism. All pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves through activities as diverse as playing musical instruments, learning to swim or practising mindfulness. These experiences help to foster pupils' talents and interests, and to prepare them for future life.

Governors have a keen insight into the school's strengths and of its priorities for improvement. They hold school leaders effectively to account for their work. Staff are highly appreciative of the opportunities that they have had to develop professionally. They appreciate the concern that leaders show for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	119879
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10321380
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nick Pilling
Headteacher	Siobhan Halligan
Website	www.cribdenhouse.lancs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with a range of needs, including speech, language and communication needs, autism, and social, emotional and mental health needs. An increasing number of pupils are admitted to the school with moderate or severe learning difficulties. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders of the school.

- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body. She also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority and with the school's external improvement adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, including a focus on early reading; mathematics; and physical development. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

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