

Bright Futures School

164 Oldham Road, Grasscroft, Oldham, Lancashire, OL4 4DW

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- Teaching is adequate. This ensures that pupils make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of the work and make adequate progress over time.
- The curriculum is adequate. Opportunities to develop basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare pupils adequately for the future.
- Leaders and managers promote personal development very effectively, enabling pupils to develop very high levels of confidence as learners.
- Although the school is steadily improving and leaders generally know the school's strengths and weaknesses, the lack of formal self-evaluation has limited improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Consequently, achievement is adequate and not better.
- More emphasis is required on the development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding.
- High levels of care, guidance and support ensure that pupils enjoy school life and feel safe at all times.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed four lessons taught by four teachers.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work and held meetings with senior leaders and managers, teachers, volunteers and pupils.
- The inspector checked the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, pupils' progress records and safeguarding information. The inspector considered the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools. The inspector took account of the views expressed in four questionnaires returned by pupils, eight from staff and a small number from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Saleem Hussain

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bright Futures School was formerly an independent preparatory school providing for pupils between the ages of three and 11 years.
- The school changed its registration and became a special school in May 2011. It now provides education for up to 12 boys and girls between the ages of five and 16 years with autism. A few pupils also have additional complex needs. Currently, there are seven pupils on roll with the youngest aged eight and oldest aged 13 years.
- The school aims include 'to deliver of a range of curriculum based activities to provide learning opportunities for pupils that prioritise remediation of the core deficits of autism whilst also facilitating academic learning.'
- There was a change in proprietorship in April 2012.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and none is looked after by a local authority. Most pupils have a history of poor attendance at former schools.
- The school is located in a large, detached property in a residential area in Grasscroft, four miles to the east of Oldham.
- It was last inspected in April 2009.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall effectiveness of the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers raise their expectations of pupils' academic achievements, and clearly state the expected learning outcomes for lessons in their planning
 - ensuring that there are more opportunities across the curriculum to develop pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT
 - ensuring that leaders and managers communicate higher expectation and ambition regarding the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - implementing systems to improve the quality of teaching and the evaluation of the work of the school.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Pupils' achievement is adequate. They make adequate progress overall in the key areas of learning, based on their starting points. Boys, girls and pupils of different ages and abilities achieve equally. Most pupils have been at the school for several months and a small number for longer periods. They all make steady progress over time and acquire knowledge and understanding securely in different subjects. Often, pupils make progress in small steps but this is because of the complexity of their special educational needs. Pupils' understanding of the work in lessons is supported effectively by the use of communication aids such as photographs and symbols, where required. Pupils develop and apply a range of key skills satisfactorily, including in mathematics and ICT. The school has just started to increase its emphasis on developing pupils' reading, writing and communication skills through taking opportunities for this in different lessons. For example, a design and technology lesson observed provided a number of successful opportunities to develop speaking, listening and spelling. All of these factors prepare pupils adequately for the next stage in their education. Since the recent change in proprietorship and the school becoming an independent special school, there have been no school leavers.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. Staff are excellent role-models for pupils and very patiently nurture pupils' personal development. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They develop excellent attitudes towards learning very quickly. Pupils are very enthusiastic and totally immerse themselves in their work. Their perseverance and levels of concentration are factors that everyone is rightly proud of. Pupils form very tolerant and cooperative relationships with each other. For example, in a science lesson they listened to each other's views very carefully and valued each other's work highly. The school is a very calm and orderly community. Pupils make an excellent contribution to this in lessons through their very high standards of personal conduct and self-discipline. Their consistently thoughtful behaviour is an outstanding factor in their personal development. Records show that pupils learn to manage their emotions very well because of the school's excellent guidance and support. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievements. Pupils treat everyone with respect and this ensures that everyone enjoys school life. Bullying of any kind is extremely rare and pupils feel safe at school. Pupils adopt safe practices very well as they learn. For example, in practical lessons they use learning resources very sensibly and with much consideration for others. Attendance is very good and punctuality is excellent. Many pupils have improved their attendance significantly, as compared to their former schools, and this makes a significant contribution to their learning.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school promotes these areas very effectively through a very detailed policy. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, educational visits, interactions with visitors, and religious education make a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The school's work to raise pupils' self-belief and confidence is outstanding. Consequently, pupils quickly realise that they have much potential as learners and apply themselves to their work diligently. Pupils develop a very clear sense of right and wrong through considering moral issues such as discrimination, prejudice, human and animal rights. They develop excellent social skills. The school provides pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in the community. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community. For example, they take part in a wide variety of projects including helping a voluntary group with wildlife conservation, acting as volunteers at local events and helping at the local church which provides hot meals for people in need. The school helps pupils to develop a very strong appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes equality and harmony between different cultural traditions. For example, pupils recently had a detailed discussion where they compared important religious festivals and

beliefs within Christianity and Islam. Each pupil made an excellent contribution to the discussion, illustrating their acceptance of the richness brought to people's lives through cultural diversity.

Quality of teaching

Adequate

Teaching is adequate. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve adequately over time. Teachers have adequate expectations regarding pupils' achievements. Lesson planning is generally adequate and ensures that pupils achieve the objectives set. However, the expected learning outcomes are not always clearly stated in the planning or challenging enough to raise achievement over time to a level which is better than adequate. Also, oral expectations stated by teachers and expectations regarding writing tasks are not challenging enough to raise the progress made in lessons to good. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are adequately taught and this results in pupils developing their independent learning skills sufficiently. Teachers question and prompt pupils carefully, and this ensures that pupils work hard and learn to think for themselves. Time is used appropriately in lessons. Teachers and their assistants work closely together to engage pupils in learning. The work is presented in an appealing way and there are many opportunities to learn through practical experiences which the pupils especially enjoy. A good example of this was seen in food technology where pupils were learning to make spaghetti bolognese. Behaviour management is excellent. It results in outstanding attitudes towards learning and ensures that the pupils act responsibly at all times. Procedures for assessment are adequate. Teachers complete assessment records at the end of each lesson. This enables the school to accurately evaluate performance over time. Targeted interventions are increasing. For example, pupils receive intensive one-to-one support to develop appreciation of letter sounds.

Quality of curriculum

Adequate

The curriculum is adequate. It meets the needs and interests of all pupils sufficiently and provides opportunities for them to make progress. The school provides appropriate experiences for pupils in all of the required areas of learning. Facilities in the local sports centres, including a swimming pool, are well used for physical education. The curriculum is adequately planned. The school implements schemes of work based on the National Curriculum and tailors these to meet individual needs. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are adequately provided for in lessons devoted to these subjects. However, more opportunities across the curriculum are required to help pupils to achieve better than adequately in these key areas of learning. Pupils are provided with adequate guidance about the world of work. Personal, social and health education is a huge strength of the school. The very sensitive approaches taken by staff regarding PSHE result in outstanding personal development. Off-site visits enable pupils to develop their social skills and contribute outstandingly to the community. For example, pupils can visit a local food bank to act as volunteers or take cakes that they have made to a local nursery. The curriculum is not yet good because more learning opportunities are required to enable pupils to achieve well academically.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. All staff are highly committed to pupils' well-being. All of the required policies are in place and implemented effectively. The school has carried out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff. All staff are trained to the required level in safeguarding pupils. This includes suitable training for the designated child protection officer. The school's safeguarding procedures are rigorous and staff are given clear guidance about their roles and responsibilities. Health and safety risk assessments are undertaken as required. This ensures that potential hazards to pupils' safety in school or on visits are identified and managed effectively. Fire risk assessments are undertaken as required; fire drills are carried out regularly and equipment checked at appropriate intervals. The school has an effective first aid policy and an appropriate number of qualified first aiders. Supervision in school is very good. There is an

effective anti-bullying policy in place. Any problems are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Arrangements to promote outstanding behaviour are fully effective. Pupils value especially the certificates they receive, for example, for their achievement and acts of kindness. These accumulate in their 'success' books which they are rightly very proud of. Pupils are keen to achieve healthy lifestyles and to stay safe. The school works well with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. All the independent school standards are met.

Leadership and management

Adequate

Leadership and management are adequate. The school's senior leadership and management team comprises an overall manager, the head of learning and the head of development. This includes the proprietors and a senior member of staff. These leaders and managers have recently taken up their positions following a change in the status of the school from a preparatory school to an independent special school. The team has worked very hard in a relatively short period of time to develop the school as a special school for autism. The team's top priority has been to ensure that the school creates a very positive and caring ethos where personal development is nurtured successfully. Leaders and managers have consistently communicated high expectations in this regard and this has resulted in pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is evident from questionnaire returns that all staff share a unity of purpose. However, the leadership of teaching is underdeveloped, as is the school's self-evaluation. Consequently, pupils are achieving adequately rather than better. The school has recently developed systems to monitor the quality of teaching; communicate higher expectation and ambition regarding achievement; and rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of all its provision. Previously, these systems were lacking. The school works positively with parents and carers, and pupils' say that they enjoy school life. The school's premises and accommodation are well maintained. The school meets all of the requirements regarding the provision of information to parents, carers and others, and the complaints procedure includes all of the necessary details. The proprietors have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Leadership and management are not yet good because the school's provision must improve in order for pupils to achieve better academically.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	105748
Inspection number	397592
DfE registration number	353/6015

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special Day school for pupils with autism
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Bright Futures School Limited
Chair	Zoe Thompson
Manager	Dixon Milburn
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2009
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,450 - £36,450
Telephone number	01457 878738
Email address	info@brightfuturesautism.com

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