

The Beacon Primary Short Stay School

Longdon Close, Woodrow South, Redditch, B98 7UZ

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils placed for more than six weeks do not make enough progress in mathematics.
- Those pupils with the most complex needs make slower progress than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Occasionally, teaching lacks challenge and teaching assistants do not always contribute sufficiently to pupils' learning. In a few lessons the pace of teaching is too slow.
- Pupils' behaviour is not always managed consistently.
- There is lack of clarity and consistency in how teachers gather information about the small steps of progress pupils make.
- Teachers do not always respond sufficiently to the training they receive and on these occasions their teaching does not improve quickly enough.
- Questioning by the management committee about the progress made by different groups of pupils requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Most pupils placed for six weeks make good progress in English and mathematics.
- A few longer-stay pupils make outstanding progress in writing.
- Excellent work is done between the school and health professionals to remove strong feelings of anger and failure in pupils and so engage pupils with learning.
- The senior leadership team and the management committee have taken decisive action this year to improve teaching and raise pupil achievement. Teaching is getting better.
- Outreach support given to mainstream schools in helping them support pupils with challenging behaviours is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons taught by two different teachers. Four of these lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The inspector carried out a work scrutiny during his observations of English and mathematics lessons and conducted a 'learning walk' through the school to observe pupils' engagement with learning. The inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the Chair of the Management Committee and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also spoke over the telephone with primary headteachers of schools where this school provides outreach support.
- The inspector looked at statements of special educational needs, pupil progress data, attendance data, teachers' planning, the school's improvement plan, monitoring of teaching information, a wide range of policies including the appraisal policy and all safeguarding policies, and minutes of the management committee meetings.
- Eight questionnaires completed by staff were examined by the inspector.
- Because there are nine pupils on roll the inspector could not access any information on the online questionnaire Parent View (there has to be at least 10 responses before the system shows any data). The inspector read cards and letters sent to the school by parents.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school makes provision for pupils who are at risk from exclusion or who have been permanently excluded from school. Most pupils are dual registered (remain on the roll of their original school) and attend this school for six weeks. They receive part of their education in this school and part of their education in their home primary schools.
- The school serves the north-east region of Worcestershire. It also caters for pupils who are bussed in some distance from the north-west region of Worcestershire.
- All pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (all have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties). Many have additional complex needs including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, attachment disorders, autistic spectrum disorders, speech and language difficulties and trauma and developmental delay. A few are undergoing statutory assessment and a very few have statements of special educational needs. The latter are waiting for a suitable placement to be found to enable them to continue their education.
- All pupils are White British.
- The school only receives pupil-premium funding (extra funding from the government for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free meals and pupils from service families) for pupils permanently excluded from their primary schools. For the dual-registered pupils this funding goes to their home schools.
- The school provides outreach support to primary schools throughout the northern regions of Worcestershire.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are both temporary. Permanent appointments are to be made for the spring term.
- The Management Committee is the same as that for The Forge Short Stay Secondary School, but the two schools are run separately and the staff are different.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all groups of pupils, including those with the most complex needs, make at least good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, by making sure that:
 - teachers use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning consistently to plan activities in small steps at the correct level of challenge to move them on to new learning
 - teaching assistants always consistently make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning
 - teachers do not slow pupils' learning by spending too long on the starter activity in their lessons at the expense of teaching the main activity
 - teachers gather information about the small steps of progress pupils make in a clear and consistent way and use this to raise their achievement.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - all staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently
 - teachers respond swiftly to the training they receive so that teaching improves
 - the management committee fully understands the progress of different groups of pupils in order to ask searching questions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the year 2012 to 2013, pupils who stayed at the school for longer than six weeks did not make the progress in mathematics they ought to have made.
- Over time, the progress of pupils with the most complex special educational needs has lagged behind that of their peers. This is because teachers do not consistently provide them with activities sufficiently suitable to move them on in very small steps of learning.
- Occasionally, more-able pupils do not make the progress they should because work is not consistently pitched at the correct level of challenge for them. At other times high expectations mean they learn rapidly.
- Pupils join the school with attainment that varies but is usually below average. Most pupils who stay for six weeks make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Longer-staying pupils (permanently excluded pupils often undergoing statutory assessment) make similar progress in reading and writing but not in mathematics. This is because teachers have not always used their knowledge of pupils' prior learning in this subject to plan work at the correct level of challenge. A few (from very low starting points) make outstanding progress in writing.
- The progress of the few pupils supported by pupil-premium funding while at this school is inconsistent. For some it is good and yet for others it is too slow. Action has been taken to improve this, but it is too early to evaluate its impact.
- Well-being achievements are outstanding. Gains in improved self-esteem and independent management of anger feelings are among the significant achievements pupils make.
- The school is very successful in enabling pupils to return full-time to the primary schools where they are dual registered or to move on to new schools.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not good throughout the school. The quality of teaching varies between classes. Occasionally, insufficient use is made of pupils' small stepped gains in progress to set them new work at the correct level of challenge to accelerate their learning.
- Typically, where teaching requires improvement, expectations of pupils' progress are too low and teaching assistants do not contribute sufficiently to pupils' learning. In such lessons teachers occasionally spend so long on the starter activity that they fail to teach the main activity for the lesson quickly enough.
- Often good use is made of questions to check pupils' understanding and to move them on to new learning. However, this is not always the case.
- Although teaching is not yet good in all lessons it is improving because teachers mostly listen to the supportive feedback from senior leaders following lesson observations and take action to improve their teaching. However, this is not always the case. On some occasions they do not

take on board the advice they are given quickly enough and when this happens their teaching does not improve immediately.

- There are examples of good English and mathematics teaching. In a well-planned and resourced English lesson pupils made good progress with their writing as they participated in an enjoyable and relevant activity focusing on being a reporter for a local newspaper.
- Similarly, in a mathematics lesson focusing on reflecting shapes across a mirror line all pupils achieved well. The more-able pupils constructed horizontal and diagonal lines successfully because the pace of teaching was rapid and the level of challenge was demanding.
- Focused and structured teaching sessions aimed at enabling pupils to manage their feelings of anger are outstanding. As pupils begin to believe that they can succeed their learning accelerates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils often show positive attitudes to learning as they engage with interesting activities in lessons. However, there is a little inconsistency. When pupils are not given enough physical space to participate in an activity or are not positioned so that they can see the resources properly that they are meant to be using their concentration wanes.
- Pupils' behaviour is not always managed well. Occasionally, teachers and teaching assistants are too slow in bringing pupils who wander off task back to learning.
- Nevertheless, most staff are skilful in managing pupils who have very challenging behaviours. Overall, excellent work is done in supporting pupils to overcome feelings of anger and successfully engage them with learning. When distressed they understand the importance of taking themselves off to a quiet room to collect their thoughts.
- Recorded instances of racism are rare. When such instances occur they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. There are no other recorded instances of bullying and fixed-term exclusions are few. Pupils say that they are safe and can talk with a trusted adult in the school whenever they want to.
- Pupils have a good understanding of cyber and prejudiced forms of bullying. They say that bullying is not an issue at school. Mostly the school is calm. Rare aggressive incidents that flare up are managed exceptionally well.
- Pupils are adept at keeping safe. They know that they must wear a helmet and put on 'knee pads' when riding a 'bike' and are acutely aware of potential stranger danger. They know how to keep safe when using a computer and understand the harmful effects of smoking.
- Attendance is high for most pupils. It has risen year-on-year over the past three years.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not made sure that all teachers respond sufficiently to the support and training they receive on how to improve the pace of their teaching or how to ensure that all pupils are challenged at all times.

- Senior leaders analyze the school's work rigorously. They make good use of the information to bring about improvement, for example in the use of structured sessions at the start and end of the day to support pupils in overcoming feelings that impede their learning.
- A new approach to teaching numeracy has been launched, but it is too early to evaluate its impact on raising standards in mathematics.
- Leadership and management of therapies and specialist programmes (like anger management) are good. Links with external health professionals and social services help pupils and their families exceptionally well. Consequently, many pupils are successfully re-integrated back into mainstream schools.
- The school does not currently have a clear and consistent system to enable teachers to capture the small stepped gains pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics so that they can use this information to plan further improvements.
- Work with parents is good. For example, the school supports parents in helping them better manage their children's behaviour at home.
- Outreach support given to mainstream schools to help them manage pupils with challenging behaviours is good.
- Staff want pupils to have equal chances to succeed and they tackle any form of discrimination rigorously. However, they do not consistently challenge all pupils at all times through their teaching.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by trips, learning outdoors and through specialist programmes to build their confidence. Effective use is made of the gym at The Forge Short Stay Secondary School and an off-site swimming pool to ensure pupils have a good physical education programme. Through interesting themes they develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils reflect deeply on any feelings of frustration and through this spiritual activity begin to modify the way they respond to difficult situations. Through religious education they learn about festivals and places of worship, such as Eid and a Gurdwara, thus their awareness of cultural diversity is raised.
- The local authority supports the school well in improving its teaching of literacy and numeracy.
- The management committee has a clear strategy for developing the skills of staff at all levels so that they are equipped to apply for more senior posts in this school and/or other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee supports senior leaders effectively. It provides a firm direction for the school under new regulations and ways of working since the previous inspection. Committee members receive information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress but understand that they need to ask more probing questions about the progress of different groups of pupils. The Chair of the Management Committee visits the school regularly and all members keep abreast of the training available to them so as to improve the quality of their support. Committee members are becoming increasingly involved in the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. They make sure that teachers' performance is linked to pay, based on how effectively they promote pupils' learning. They know what the school is

doing to tackle any underperformance. The headteacher's performance is reviewed in accordance with regulations. All safeguarding requirements are met.

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

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| Unique reference number | 130987 |
| Local authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 426917 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 5–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 9 |
| Appropriate authority | The management committee |
| Chair | Matt Whiteley |
| Headteacher | Lesley Hatton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 19 June 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01527 514068 |
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