

Bridgelea Pupil Referral Unit

Bridgelea Road, Withington, Manchester, Greater Manchester. M20 3FB.

Inspection dates

8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- When pupils join the school, the vast majority have knowledge and skills which are much lower than those expected for their age, often due to gaps in their learning linked to their previous behaviour. With help from skilled staff and the consistent management of behaviour, the majority of pupils re-engage quickly with learning and start to make up lost ground.
- Teaching is typically good; sometimes, it is outstanding. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and achieve well.
- The good quality of work seen in pupils' books and school data show that over time pupils make good and better progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in classrooms and around the two school sites. Their good attitudes to learning help them to achieve well.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They learn how to keep safe both inside and outside school, for example, through the provision of road safety training.
- The highly effective headteacher and senior leaders work closely with the management committee. This very strong partnership has raised both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, so supporting school improvement, since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in reading is not as strong as in writing and mathematics. Pupils spend too little time practising and improving their reading skills.
- The quality of some books is not sufficiently engaging to help pupils develop a love of reading and some staff need further training in teaching reading skills.
- Not all middle leaders have the skills to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas to enable them to support senior leaders in raising pupils' achievement further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and parts of lessons taught by teachers and support staff. One observation was undertaken jointly with the headteacher. An inspector also listened to a pupil from Year 1 read. Inspectors examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- Inspectors held meetings and had discussions with pupils, the headteacher, middle leaders, members of the school staff and the Chair of the Management Committee. They also held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents with whom they met informally as well as from those parents who were contacted by telephone. Too few parents made their views known through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for these to be reviewed by inspectors.
- The inspection team studied health and safety documentation, teachers' planning, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff, pupils' attendance data and the school's system for checking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a pupil referral unit for up to 36 pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 who have either been permanently excluded from mainstream school or who are in danger of becoming so, because of social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Support is also offered by pupil referral unit staff to mainstream primary schools in order to help them to manage and improve the behaviour of individual pupils to reduce the likelihood of exclusion.
- There are only small numbers of pupils in each year group.
- A small proportion of pupils have other learning difficulties such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- The majority of pupils who attend are of White British origin. A much smaller proportion is from other ethnic groups. The vast majority of pupils who attend are boys; there are few girls.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The large majority of pupils who attend are supported at school action plus. A smaller proportion has a statement of special educational needs, often gained during the time they attend the school.
- Since the last inspection, the school has moved premises twice and now comprises two units, one located on the south side of Manchester and one close to the centre of Manchester.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' achievement in reading by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their reading skills each day
 - increasing the range of interesting and exciting books and other resources in classrooms in order to encourage pupils to read and enjoy the experience
 - offering relevant training to the small number of staff who are not yet confident in teaching reading skills.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that all middle leaders have the skills they need to make checks on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility in order to improve further the achievement of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good across both the school sites. Current school data and the work in pupils' books show that over time all pupils make good and better progress, often from low starting points. By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is closer to the national picture, although still below.
- All staff very effectively involve pupils in learning and understand their behavioural needs. This ensures that even when crisis point is reached by an individual pupil and their behaviour dips, the learning of others remains unaffected and continues well.
- Achievement has risen over the last two years for all groups of pupils. Gaps in achievement between different groups are closing. For example, school data show that pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, made better progress last year than their peers.
- Overall, progress in reading is not as strong as in writing and mathematics. This is because pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity each day to practise and improve their reading skills. Occasionally, staff lack the skills to teach reading effectively. Some reluctant readers do not have access to a sufficiently wide range of exciting and interesting reading materials and activities.
- The most able pupils make good and better progress, particularly in mathematics and writing. This is because teachers have high expectations of what these pupils can achieve and set work which engages and challenges them to achieve their potential across different subjects.
- The needs of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are successfully identified and well-targeted extra support is put in place to improve their learning. As a result, progress for all groups is equally good. This shows the school's continued commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Leaders' very clear focus on ensuring all pupils making good academic progress, as well as securing improvement in their behaviour, contributes to their successful return to mainstream schools. Gaps in learning, often caused by episodes of difficult behaviour, are quickly identified when pupils join the school. Quick and effective action is taken, and the work set ensures that pupils make good progress and successfully catch up on missed learning.
- For the majority of pupils, their stay in the school is usually short, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, those who need to stay longer make at least good progress because of the good range of interesting and engaging activities offered which helps them to learn quickly and develop new knowledge and skills. For example, some pupils have yet to develop the physical skills needed to balance on a scooter or pedal a bike. Staff work successfully to ensure pupils develop these skills through the range of activities offered in the school's well set out outdoor provision.

The quality of teaching is good

- School records and evidence in pupils' work books support the view of school leaders that the quality of teaching is typically good over time.
- Teachers plan well pupils' future learning. As a result, work set has the right level of challenge and enables all groups, including the most able, to make good and better progress. 'I enjoy school because teachers make work easier to understand', commented a pupil whose views reflected comments made by others.
- Pupils' learning in writing and mathematics is good. Despite their high levels of need and often low self esteem, pupils are proud of the writing they produce in their 'Big Write' books. Their continuing success, and the encouragement they receive from staff, ensures they are keen to write more, often for the first time in their school career.
- Pupils' good gains in, for example, using multiplication and division skills to solve more

complicated problems are because the quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- Pupils are often reluctant readers when they arrive at the school. However, while there are some reading activities every day, pupils are not able to practise and improve their reading skills enough to enable them to make better progress.
- Classroom resources do not always encourage pupils to want to read. For example, the range of interesting and inspiring books in some classrooms is not as good as it could be and the 'awe and magic' which are present in well-written books is not always reflected on classroom displays.
- Occasionally, staff do not have the skills to improve pupils' reading skills through, for example, reinforcing the use of phonics (matching sounds to letters) in order to support the reading of difficult words.
- Parents spoken with describe the staff as offering 'amazing levels of support to both children and their families'. One parent commented that her child now enjoyed coming to school and learning and had made such good progress that he now wrote stories for pleasure at home.
- Over time, there are very high expectations of what pupils can learn academically and of pupils' standards of behaviour and social skills. These could clearly be seen in a sports lesson in which pupils were learning football skills. After completing a rigorous warm up session, which helped to improve their health and well-being, they played a short football tournament. Pupils made good progress, engaged well, showing good football skills, but also showed polite attitudes to others and staff even when their team was losing.
- Staff work closely together to ensure additional sessions planned for pupils who need extra help with their learning result in those pupils making the same good rates of progress as others in the school.
- The majority of pupils' work is marked diligently and guidance is given on how to improve. As a result, both the presentation and content of pupils' work improve during their time in the school.
- Subjects such as religious education, personal and social education, and art and drama therapy promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority of pupils' behaviour is good despite their high level of need. Many improve their behaviour significantly during their time at the school, as a result of the consistent and well-organised management of pupils' behaviour. This change enables the vast majority to make a successful transfer back to mainstream school or on to another provision.
- While incidents of difficult behaviour do occur, usually when pupils are new to the school, in most classrooms learning continues unabated because staff manage pupils' behaviour well. The school's ethos of ensuring that pupils become 'successful, happy, independent, nurtured and empowered learners' (SHINE) improves their self-esteem and self confidence. This, in turn, improves their understanding of how to improve their behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. Behaviour around the two school sites and at lunchtime is orderly.
- Pupils often show caring and friendly attitudes to each other, to staff and to visitors. They are usually keen and eager to learn and this helps with their progress.
- Parents and grandparents who spoke with inspectors hold the school and staff in high esteem, commenting that behaviour strategies they have learnt from staff have improved pupils' behaviour at home as well as at school.
- School records show that, over time, incidents of difficult behaviour have reduced because of the effective way in which procedures to secure good behaviour are consistently applied on both of the school sites.
- The majority of pupils enjoy school and are eager to attend. As a result, the attendance of individuals improves during their time in school and overall attendance has improved over the last two years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.

- Clear and effective, well-planned systems ensure pupils arrive and depart safely. Risk assessments ensure that premises are kept as secure as possible, reducing the likelihood of danger for pupils even when their behaviour dips.
- Pupils spoken with were clear about the different forms bullying can take. They feel incidents happen infrequently because staff ensure pupils are made aware of how to keep safe and where to turn should an incident happen inside or outside school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have an exceptionally clear and focused plan for improvement which is shared by all staff and the management committee members. As a result of this very strong team work, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have improved since the previous inspection.
- A clear plan to bring about further improvement is in place and focuses upon achieving excellence in the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have accurately identified those areas of the school's work which are in need of improvement and have set suitable targets to reach their goals.
- The quality of teaching has improved to be consistently good, due to the conscientious checking undertaken by senior leaders, and the effective feedback they provide to teachers to help them improve their skills.
- The role of middle leaders is beginning to develop. However, they do not all have the skills they need to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects, so that they can effectively support leaders' drive to raise pupils' achievement further.
- The headteacher ensures performance targets for staff link directly to pupils' achievement and targets within the school's improvement plan. Checks on the performance of staff are undertaken regularly and this information is used to make decisions on teachers' pay.
- The curriculum is well organised and subjects are clearly linked to other areas of learning. Planned changes to the curriculum are in place ahead of the national deadline. Support from sports coaches at lunchtime ensures the development of pupils' skills. They offer pupils good opportunities to try new things and develop new skills in, for example, basketball, athletics and football. This improves pupils' health and well-being.
- The local authority has much confidence in the leadership skills of senior leaders and has offered a light-touch level of support over the last year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - A recent audit undertaken by the management committee confirmed members have a good range of skills and experience which they regularly update through further training. Members have developed an exceptionally clear understanding of pupils' achievement through their interpretation and understanding of national data. As a result, they offer senior leaders good levels of support and challenge in their quest to bring about further improvement. In partnership with senior leaders, the management committee has developed an effective system for checking the performance of all staff which rewards good teaching and addresses any underperformance. They manage their delegated budget prudently and this careful management has enabled them to support pupils well. Safeguarding procedures and policies meet current requirements.

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	133945
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	442399

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

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	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barrie Chalmers
Headteacher	Philip Hoyland
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2013
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