

Heybridge Alternative Provision School

The Street, Heybridge, Maldon, CM9 4NB

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The executive headteacher, senior leaders and managers provide outstanding leadership. They have been successful in raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection, and they ensure that the school is continuously developing.
- The management committee has provided excellent support for the school to improve. Its members, most of whom are secondary school headteachers, have a very clear vision and high expectations for the school.
- The local authority oversees the work of the school very effectively. Seamless working and excellent relationships between the alternative school and mainstream schools greatly assist the referral of students, the way preventative work is organised and the availability of places when pupils are ready to reintegrate into mainstream.
- Students' behaviour and the transformation in their attitudes to learning are outstanding. They speak in glowing terms about how the school has turned their lives around.
- Students feel exceptionally safe in the school and valued as individuals. There are exemplary systems for safeguarding students, and the school works very closely with other agencies.
- Students' achievement is outstanding. A high proportion make better than expected progress during their time at the school.
- At Key Stage 3, many students return successfully to mainstream school or are able to avoid being permanently excluded through the support they receive. At Key Stage 4, nearly all students leave with a range of qualifications and go on to further education courses.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers are very skilled in motivating students and match work closely to their individual needs.
- The school provides its students with high quality guidance and support. This prepares them very well for the future and helps them to work towards their chosen goals.
- Parents who expressed their views are highly positive about the way the school supports their children.
- Teachers have good opportunities to develop their skills through training and observing one another. Even more could be done, however, to spread best practice within the school and with the other pupil referral unit at which the headteacher is executive head.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 19 lessons. In addition, inspectors looked at students’ books, talked to them about their work and checked their progress over time to provide a balance of evidence on teaching and learning. Inspectors looked at break time arrangements and talked with a group of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the senior leaders, who take responsibility for different aspects of the school’s work. Discussions took place with three members of the management committee and with two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team considered the 17 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, the responses to the school’s own parental survey and some written comments from parents, as well as speaking with a small number of parents and carers. The inspection team also took into account the 27 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation. This included: the school’s self-evaluation and development plan; records of students’ attainment, progress, behaviour and attendance; and systems for protecting and safeguarding students.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Cox

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Heybridge Alternative Provision School provides for students who have social, emotional and mental health needs, and who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools. All the students have special educational needs as a result of their difficulties.
- The school is based on one site, but it is also responsible for providing hospital education at Broomfield in Chelmsford for students who are admitted to hospital for a short time or who have conditions that lead to repeated admissions.
- In the current academic year, staff from the school have provided tuition at the hospital, in students' homes and in some cases at other locations for 232 students.
- Staff from the school also provide outreach support to local schools for students who are at risk of permanent exclusion as well as supporting students' reintegration into mainstream school.
- The majority of students are dual-registered with their mainstream schools while they spend all or some of their time at the Heybridge. Students typically spend two terms at the school.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for pupil premium funding is broadly average. This funding is for students in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school makes use of a number of alternative providers at Key Stage 4. These include Circles Farm, Rallysport, Youthbuild, Danbury Outdoors, Horsebreak and therapeutic music sessions through Music Unlimited. At the time of the inspection, Year 11 students had already left school and so there were no college placements.
- There has been a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection. In all, eight staff have left, some at leadership level. This is as a result of the age profile of the departing staff, most of whom retired. The school has been effective in replacing these staff with experienced mainstream teachers.
- The executive headteacher is also executive head at North East Essex Alternative Provision School. The senior leadership team has been restructured since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing strengths in teaching to increase the amount that is outstanding by:
 - making greater use of the outstanding teaching already in the school as an example to other teachers
 - extending links between the Heybridge site and North East Essex Alternative Provision School to pool best practice.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher provides outstanding leadership and direction of the school's work, and she is supported exceptionally well by the other senior leaders. They all communicate high expectations and work continuously to bring about improvement. All senior leaders are highly committed to providing the best possible learning experiences for the students, and have established a culture in which relationships are positive, teaching can flourish and students are expected to behave well.
- The restructuring of the senior leadership team has increased the school's effectiveness. Senior leaders have clearly defined areas of responsibility and work together exceptionally well to raise achievement and improve the opportunities provided for students.
- Middle leaders, such as teachers with responsibility for subjects, have had good opportunities to develop their skills and they make a significant contribution to the school's effectiveness.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Leaders conduct rigorous checks on teachers' performance and provide them with clear direction about what is working well and what could be improved. Any underperformance is swiftly identified and addressed. Leaders carry out careful checks on students' progress to identify those who need extra help, to make sure they all have equal opportunities and to prevent any discrimination. As a result, students' success at the end of Key Stage 4 has improved year on year since the last inspection.
- The curriculum is matched very closely to the needs and interests of individual students. At Key Stage 3, the focus is on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills, improving their behaviour and attitudes to learning. This is so that they are able either to avoid being permanently excluded from their mainstream schools or to enable them to reintegrate successfully into mainstream following a period of support. Students have opportunities to take part in music therapy and horse riding as well as to receive individual support in literacy and numeracy.
- At Key Stage 4, students follow a personalised programme devised to meet their individual needs and to reflect their plans for the future. All students have the opportunity to take a minimum of five GCSE subjects, including English and mathematics, together with vocational courses and undertake work experience. They have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of sporting activities, and some students have been on a residential trip to an army training camp in Devon.
- The school provides high quality advice and guidance to students, and makes sure they are prepared extremely well for further education or training. Support often extends beyond the time students spend at the school because staff often provide further support to them even after they have moved on to college.
- The school does a great deal to raise students' self-esteem and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The promotion of British values and preparation for life in modern Britain underpins much of the school's work, and they receive regular attention in assemblies and in the personal, social and health education programme. Staff continuously instil in students the importance of being honest and tolerant, and the school does a great deal to expand their horizons. It does this, for example, through welcoming visitors such as a performance poet, African drummers and Olympic athletes, through trips to art galleries and involvement in media projects.
- The school makes effective use of its pupil premium funding which helps these students to make similar progress to their classmates. It uses the funding to help students to overcome previous barriers to learning, to develop their basic skills and increase their confidence as learners. This includes extending learning opportunities for individuals and close work with their parents to promote their learning and personal development.
- The school has exemplary systems for keeping students safe, and its arrangements meet statutory

requirements. All the staff are highly trained, undertaking far more courses than those required, and the school works very closely with other agencies not only to protect students but also to raise their awareness of how to stay safe. The school is equally thorough in checking on the safety of students who attend alternative provision.

- The school works exceptionally well in partnership with mainstream schools and with external professionals, including social services and child and adolescent mental health services. The excellent relationship it has established with mainstream schools is a key factor in the school's success. It is held in high regard by mainstream schools for the flexible and supportive way in which it works to meet each student's particular needs.
- The school also works extremely well in fostering excellent relationships with parents. All students have a personal tutor who makes weekly contact with their parents, so that they are fully involved and kept closely informed about how their children are doing. All the parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others, and those who spoke to an inspector or whose written comments were taken into account spoke in glowing terms about the school's work. Parents say that the staff have been 'incredible' and 'amazing', and respond immediately to any problems that arise, frequently going beyond the call of duty to support students and their families.
- The school is thorough in monitoring the progress, attendance and behaviour of students attending alternative provision. There are regular review meetings for all students, including those who are dual-registered with mainstream schools and who attend other providers for part of their time. The school provides regular data on students' attendance and progress to referring schools.
- Teachers have good opportunities to observe one another's teaching and to develop their practice through training, and there are already some productive links between the Heybridge and North East Essex Alternative Provision schools. Even more could be done, however, to share the particular features of outstanding teaching more widely among the staff and to exploit the links between the two pupil referral units.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is a major strength and, alongside the excellent leadership of the executive headteacher, contributes a great deal to the school's effectiveness.
 - The local authority, in its governance role, has a detailed knowledge of the school's work and provides clear guidance for school leaders. The local authority regularly checks on all aspects, including some in-depth reviews of the school's work and, as a result, has an accurate view of leaders' impact. These highly effective structures are of particular assistance in establishing productive relationships with mainstream schools.
 - The work of the management committee has been strengthened since the last inspection and nearly all the members of the committee are mainstream headteachers. This has contributed greatly to ensuring that the right pupils are referred to the school and that they are quickly reintegrated into mainstream when they are ready. Members of the committee have an excellent clarity of vision about the way forward for the school and provide a high level of challenge and support for senior leaders.
 - Members of the committee are very well informed about how well students are achieving and are able to compare this with the grades predicted for them before they joined the school. The management committee has a thorough knowledge of the quality of teaching and how teachers' performance is managed. They ensure that the most effective teachers are rewarded financially and that any minor underperformance is tackled. They check closely on the use of pupil premium funding to ensure it is effective and make sure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for the safeguarding of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Almost all the students arrive at the school having had a negative experience of education but staff are highly skilled in re-engaging them and communicating to

them the fact that they can succeed.

- During their time at the school, nearly all students develop positive attitudes to learning, show interest in lessons and attend regularly. Even students who have previously refused to attend their mainstream schools reach the point where they have an attendance rate at Heybridge that is approaching the national average.
- Students who were interviewed during the inspection, including some Year 11 students who came in especially, spoke in glowing terms about the school and its effect on them. They said that it is like 'a private school for students who deserve another chance, with staff who totally understand us'. Others said that the experience 'has been a joy' and that they 'could not have imagined a better place'.
- The atmosphere in the school is calm and purposeful and in lessons, all the students are engaged in learning. Students enjoy excellent relationships with the staff and treat them with respect. They take care of the learning environment, including the numerous displays around the corridors, and the school's equipment.
- The introduction of a new behaviour for learning policy has led to consistency of approach from staff and a clear understanding of expectations, rewards and sanctions by students and parents. Students respond very well to the rewards system and their achievements are recognised in weekly assemblies.
- Students' very positive attitudes to learning are evident by their response to the school's after-school revision sessions that are held in the Spring and Summer terms to support achievement at GCSE. Attendance at these sessions has been 99% this year.
- Parents rate behaviour highly, and home school liaison workers support them to implement effective approaches to behaviour management at home if required.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students say that they feel exceptionally safe at the school, and even those who are anxious school refusers develop confidence because of the supportive environment where their needs are fully met.
- Students understand how to keep themselves safe and the school has a close working relationship with the community police officer, the youth offending team and the drug and alcohol advice service. It commissions mentoring services for students at risk, and knows in detail the particular areas where individual students need additional guidance to help them stay safe.
- Students know about different types of bullying. Some have been bullied in mainstream school before coming to Heybridge. Bullying is rare and it is tackled immediately, as confirmed by school records. The school runs anti-bullying events, and there is a designated member of staff who is responsible for ensuring that any bullying incidents are quickly addressed.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Records of students' progress, their work and lesson observations show that it is now outstanding.
- The school is quick to identify students' needs and has established systems for coping with new arrivals. All the students undertake a short induction and assessment process when they join to ensure that their learning needs are quickly identified. This ensures that staff can immediately target gaps in their learning and enable them to make rapid progress.
- Teachers are subject specialists who are highly skilled in motivating the students and communicating their own enthusiasm for learning. They have high expectations, many having previously taught in mainstream schools.

- Teachers ensure that students work in a stimulating environment that is rich with examples of their own work and information to inspire their learning. Lessons are planned thoroughly and work is nearly always matched precisely to the next steps in students' learning.
- In nearly all subjects including in literacy, reading and mathematics, teaching that enabled students to make outstanding progress was seen during the inspection. In English lessons, teachers were highly skilled at questioning students, drawing out their ideas and guiding them to improve their work. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher made excellent use of a series of cards showing algebraic equations to test students' knowledge of how to calculate area and volume. This not only stimulated discussion but also included links to other subjects and developed students' mathematical skills.
- Excellent questioning and guidance to students was evident in science and in design and technology lessons, where routines and attention to health and safety were also very well established. In art, students received outstanding individual support, with exactly the right balance of challenge and encouragement. In physical education, a high level of challenge and a great deal of expertise was evident as the teacher led a student through a training session on the school's outdoor gym equipment and linked it directly to the students' planned career path.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants well in order to support students' learning. Teaching assistants are attached to departments so that they can develop specialist subject knowledge and to provide continuity of support in lessons. As a result, they often work seamlessly alongside teachers, questioning and advising individual students. All teaching assistants have additional responsibilities and some are trained to use intensive support programmes.
- The school has clear systems for quickly gathering information from students' home schools, when it provides them with tuition at Broomfield Hospital. The school supports students on the level at which they are working and what coursework they should be doing. This enables staff to provide the students with meaningful learning experiences that contribute to their progress.
- The use of virtual learning allows staff to set students independent learning tasks matched exactly to their needs and extends their learning time. The school uses virtual learning programmes especially as part of its off-site tuition for students at Key Stage 3 and those doing GCSE courses to supplement learning onsite.
- Teachers provide good support to students who have additional special educational needs. Staff have all had training in literacy support, and a speech and language specialist supports individual students who need it.
- The school has focused on making feedback to students as effective as possible in order to raise their achievement and has established a working party to oversee its approach to assessment without National Curriculum levels. Students receive a great deal of individual guidance in lessons and their books show that teachers regularly provide detailed information about what they have done well and how they could improve.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students join the unit with attainment that is often below national expectations for their age – or with gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding - because of a history of poor attendance, disrupted education and negative attitudes to learning.
- Achievement is outstanding because the proportion of students who make better than expected progress is much greater than that seen nationally. The school enables students who were previously failing in education to turn their lives around and meet with a newfound level of success. All groups of students achieve extremely well and there is no significant difference between the progress made by boys and girls or by students from different ethnic backgrounds.

- A high proportion of the students who join the school at Key Stage 3 are successfully reintegrated into mainstream school after on average two terms at Heybridge. Mainstream schools confirm that many of the students who are supported through preventative programmes successfully remain in school and are enabled to make good progress with their work.
- GCSE results demonstrate that in the three years since the last inspection, changes to staffing and to the curriculum have secured significant improvements in students' achievement. The school's examination results have improved year on year.
- In 2014, nearly all students gained at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to G, including English and mathematics, and the most able performed in the A* to C range in some subjects. In addition, some students gained passes in BTEC sport – all seven students following this course gained two Level 2 passes last year - and in a range of vocational courses.
- Groups of students have regular opportunities to work with film companies to make their own short films. A short animation created by the students, entitled 'Paper Dolls' on issues around body image and society's obsession with appearance, won an international award through the United Nations Cultural Diversity Unit. This film is now featured in the Paley Award winners' compilation film for 2014.
- Achievement in art is outstanding. Students have very good opportunities to develop skills in two and three dimensions and make very good use of other artists' work as a stimulus for their own expression. Students' written work and lessons observed show that achievement is outstanding for many in English and they have good opportunities to develop their literacy skills in other subjects. Students make outstanding progress in physical education and in design and technology. Their books show that progress in other subjects is at least good.
- The most-able students achieve exceptionally well and have the opportunity take a large number of GCSEs. They produce a good amount of work in mathematics and come up with some very creative ideas in art and in design and technology. In English, they produce imaginative as well as lengthy pieces of writing. This was evident in the work of a student at Key Stage 3 who began a gothic horror story with, 'He looked out into the obsidian darkness, the car's engine spluttered and gave off a grey smoke. The moon was high in the sky, it shone with its white light. He left the car and looked down the murky road.'
- Students make good progress through the time they spend with alternative providers, including college placements. They extend their skills, often in work-related learning that stands them in good stead for the next stage of their lives.
- The school enables students who are admitted to hospital to make good progress and keep up with their learning despite time out of their home school. In order to try to ensure that students with medical needs and those who are anxious school refusers are able to cope with five or more subjects, the school makes some use of early entry at GCSE. It does this for individual students and where applicable, gives them the opportunity to retake a subject later in the year to gain a higher grade. This ensures that they benefit rather than being disadvantaged by the practice.
- There were too few students in Year 11 eligible for the pupil premium to compare their attainment with that of their classmates in English and mathematics in 2014. Nevertheless, a recent in-depth report on the use and impact of the school's pupil premium spending shows that students eligible for this funding make similar progress to the rest of the students.
- The vast majority of students progress successfully to the next stage of their education or training. Last year, the school ran a pilot for a very few students to repeat their Year 11 programme and they now have college or work placements as a result.

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	132205
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	447980

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Executive headteacher	Philomena Cozens
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2011
Telephone number	01621 856275
Fax number	01621 851864
Email address	philomena.cozens@heybridgeaps.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone [0300 123 4234](tel:03001234234), or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and *inspects* to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone [0300 123 4234](tel:03001234234), or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: [0300 123 4234](tel:03001234234)
Textphone: [0161 618 8524](tel:01616188524)
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015

