

Newbridge Short Stay Secondary School

Midland Road, Worcester, Worcestershire WR5 1DS

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, have not ensured that the school provides an acceptable standard of education. Over time, they have not demonstrated the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.
- Leaders and staff have not been held to close enough account for improving the school by governors. The performance of teaching staff, at all levels, has not been closely monitored and they have not been set meaningful targets to improve the progress of pupils. The result has been that teaching, learning and assessment are weak.
- Governors have not challenged the slow progress made by all groups of pupils and extremely low attendance. They have not scrutinised the information that they have been given by school leaders closely enough so they do not have a clear understanding of the school's priorities.
- Beyond the current senior leadership team, leadership is weak and underdeveloped. Staff have been given few opportunities to take responsibility in the past.
- Assessment is infrequent and often inaccurate so teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils know and can do. The progress that pupils make is not closely monitored so teachers are unable to plan effectively to meet pupils' needs.
- Although recently changed, the curriculum was poorly designed and delivered. It did not engage pupils in learning, promote positive behaviour or encourage regular attendance. It has resulted in inadequate outcomes over time.
- Additional funding has not been used effectively to improve the progress and attendance of all pupils. The impact of actions to improve outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who need to catch up in Year 7 and disadvantaged pupils has not been carefully measured. Consequently, leaders are unclear about which actions are having the most impact.
- Attendance for all groups of pupils is very low. An extremely high proportion of pupils are regularly absent and many pupils, particularly when they first join the school, attend on a part-time basis.

The school has the following strengths

- The current senior leadership team has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and it is beginning to take action to improve the school.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained and have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, teaching, assessment, outcomes and behaviour by ensuring that:
 - the governing body holds leaders to close account for rapidly improving the quality of education provided by the school
 - additional funding is used well in order to improve outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, low-prior-attaining pupils and disadvantaged pupils
 - processes for managing the performance of teaching staff hold them to close account for improving the progress made by all groups of pupils
 - effective systems are put in place to improve the quality of teaching in the school
 - accurate assessment of what pupils know and can do takes place regularly and is used by teaching staff to inform planning to allow pupils to make improved progress from their starting points
 - staff are given opportunities to lead developments in the school, and those with responsibilities for particular aspects of the school's work take effective action to make improvements
 - recently introduced systems for promoting positive behaviour are developed to secure sustained improvements in this area of the school's work
 - the new curriculum is embedded and is used to engage all pupils in appropriate learning activities and to encourage positive behaviour and regular attendance.
- Take immediate and effective action to improve the attendance of all groups of pupils and significantly reduce the proportion of pupils who do not receive full-time education.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, have not ensured that the school provides an acceptable standard of education over time.
- There have been several changes in leadership since the academy formed. Some effective actions have not been given time to embed and staff have been given inconsistent messages about the school's priorities. At times, aspirations have either not been high enough or have been unrealistic.
- Leaders have not taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and the progress, attendance and behaviour of pupils. Consequently, leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have not ensured that many pupils receive their full-time education entitlement. Pupils usually start at the short-stay school on a reduced timetable and some pupils do not attend on a full-time basis when they are on the school's roll. This seriously limits the progress that they make.
- Since the academy was formed, leaders and staff have not been held to close enough account for inadequate teaching, learning and assessment, unacceptably low outcomes and pupils' poor personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- The management of teachers' performance has been ineffective. A significant proportion of staff have not been set meaningful targets to improve teaching, and their practice has not been monitored closely. An improved system was put in place in the autumn term of 2016, but this still does not focus enough on improving the quality of teaching and speeding up the progress that pupils make. This is limiting its impact.
- The curriculum has failed to meet the needs of pupils as it has led to very poor outcomes. It has not engaged pupils in learning, promoted positive behaviour or encouraged regular attendance. There are few extra-curricular activities to extend learning that takes place in the classroom.
- Leaders have taken well-informed steps to introduce a new curriculum offer, which focuses on addressing the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Key stage 3 pupils are now following different pathways informed by their initial assessments and key stage 4 pupils are beginning to study a range of accredited qualifications. However, it is too early to assess the impact of these changes.
- Staff take opportunities to promote fundamental British values when pupils are in school. Tolerance and respect are encouraged and prejudiced behaviour is challenged. The concept of making the right choices is regularly reinforced, and moral, cultural and social development is a key part of the school's work. This has helped to improve pupils' behaviour in the school. However, pupils' spiritual awareness is limited.
- The current senior leadership team has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and it is beginning to take action to make improvements. However, the leadership team is not yet fully staffed and middle leadership is weak and underdeveloped.

- Staff are very positive about the changes that are currently being made. For example, they can see the positive impact that recent actions have had on the behaviour of pupils. They feel that they are part of the drive to make further improvements and they now understand the vision for the school.
- Additional funding is accounted for, but it has not been used effectively to improve the progress and attendance of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. The impact of actions supported by pupil premium, special educational needs or Year 7 catch-up funding is not carefully measured, so leaders and governors are unclear about which interventions are having the most impact.
- Aspects of communication with parents are effective. Staff are in regular contact with pupils' families, and parents are frequent visitors to the school. However, the school's website does not comply with Department for Education (DfE) guidance about what schools should publish and, although parents now receive information about initial assessments, they have not yet received accurate information about their child's progress in the school.
- Advance Trust provides useful human resources, recruitment, information technology and financial services to the school. It has also facilitated training for staff and delivered impartial careers advice to pupils. However, the trust did not act quickly enough to ensure that the school was providing an acceptable standard of education over time.
- I strongly recommend that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors and trustees have not ensured that the school has provided an adequate standard of education. They have not held leaders to close account for poor teaching, the slow progress made by all groups of pupils and extremely low attendance. Governors have accepted the limited information that they have been given by school leaders in the past, so they have been unable to form a clear understanding of pupils' outcomes. As a result, they were unable to demand the rapid improvements that the school required.
- Those responsible for governance have not ensured that additional funding has been used effectively, that performance management has been used to improve the quality of teaching and that the school's website complies with the DfE's guidance.
- Governors and trustees have taken action to improve leadership. The new leadership team is providing governors with accurate and detailed information about the school. Meetings are well attended and governors use their training and experience to ask informed questions about the information they receive.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have a very clear understanding of what to do if they have a concern about the welfare of a pupil and they have benefited from regular and up-to-date training.
- Records are well kept and stored securely. Outside agencies are informed of concerns in a timely manner. Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors and the site is

secure. Safeguarding arrangements at alternative providers are thoroughly examined.

- Children missing from education protocols are followed systematically. The families of pupils who are not in school are contacted on the first day of absence and pupils who are currently on part-time timetables are seen or contacted on a daily basis. School leaders have plans to ensure that all pupils receive their full-time educational entitlement, but the timeframe for this has not yet been established.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been poor since the academy opened. Many teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils know and can do, so they are unable to plan learning activities that allow pupils to make adequate progress from their starting points.
- Assessment did not take place or was inaccurate in the past, so the progress of pupils was not closely monitored. Consequently, staff were unable to ensure that activities built upon prior learning. Current leaders are beginning to address this, but their actions are yet to have a marked impact. There is still no overarching assessment system in the school, so progress is still not tracked effectively.
- Teachers often focus on what they want pupils to do rather than what they want them to learn. Activities occupy pupils rather than allowing them to make at least adequate progress from their starting points. Staff do not use their positive relationships with pupils to challenge them to make sufficient progress. Frequently, all pupils complete the same activities regardless of their prior learning or current needs.
- There is some effective teaching in the school. Where it has most impact, teachers and teaching assistants work well together, focus on learning, use questions to deepen understanding and devise activities that link to life outside school. For example, the practical application of mathematical concepts is used by staff to reinforce the significance of mathematics and deepen pupils' understanding of this subject.
- Pupils usually present their work well and reading is actively promoted in the school. The recently introduced dedicated time for reading is used effectively and pupils appreciate the opportunity to read a range of texts in a calm, purposeful environment. Routines for reading have been quickly established and, during the inspection, it was clear that pupils were keen to read.
- At times, one-to-one sessions and small-group work are used effectively to help pupils with their studies. However, these interventions are not used consistently. Too often, pupils are not focused on their learning or they are not in the classroom. This limits the progress that they make.
- Work is provided for pupils who are absent or attend the school on a part-time basis. However, the quality of this work is not closely monitored, so its impact on pupils' progress is limited. The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been effectively monitored over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Pupils are unclear about how to be successful learners and many lack confidence in themselves. Staff support individuals and attempt to promote physical and emotional well-being and healthy lifestyles, including exercise. However, pupils do not always respond positively to this encouragement and many are not in school so they cannot benefit from opportunities to promote personal development and welfare through the curriculum.
- Pupils and staff are aware of different types of bullying and acknowledge that it does take place in school. However, unkindness is followed up conscientiously and no serious concerns were raised by parents, pupils or staff. 'Restorative' meetings are held to help to resolve conflict when it arises.
- A range of age-appropriate topics related to safety are taught through the curriculum and pupils are given individual guidance as required. For example, pupils are taught about online safety and the dangers of extremism. However, high absenteeism means that some pupils are not in school when some issues are covered.
- Pupils receive impartial information, advice and guidance about the choices they have when they leave school. Pupils' personal development, welfare and positive behaviour are promoted well in alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Over time, there have been many instances of poor behaviour that have resulted in permanent exclusions and disruption to learning. There have been recent improvements in the behaviour of pupils and fixed-term exclusions are beginning to decline. There were few instances of inappropriate behaviour during the inspection.
 - Pupils' conduct is beginning to improve and some pupils are able to demonstrate self-discipline. During this inspection, no instances of disruption to learning were seen. However, pupils were not consistently focused on their studies and some off-task behaviour was observed.
 - Behaviour has not been managed effectively over time. Concerns were raised by parents about poor behaviour in the past, but pupils and staff believe that behaviour has improved recently. No recent concerns about behaviour were raised by parents to the inspection team. Inspection evidence confirmed that behaviour is beginning to improve.
- Attendance for all groups of pupils is very low. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is currently higher than that of other pupils in the school, but it is still well below that of other pupils nationally. An extremely high proportion of pupils are persistently

absent and many pupils attend the school on a part-time basis. Leaders are beginning to address irregular attendance and measures are in place to check on the safety of those who are not in school. However, so far, actions to improve attendance have been ineffective.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Over time, pupils have made very slow progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Pupils enrol at the school at different points in key stage 3 and, more often, in key stage 4 after their previous schooling has been disrupted. Consequently, many pupils join the school with attainment levels that are generally low for their age.
- School leaders have not ensured that pupils' starting points are accurately assessed when they join the school. Aspirational, but realistic, academic targets have not been set and staff, pupils and parents are unclear about the progress pupils are making and what they need to do to improve. This has had a significant impact on restricting the progress of all pupils in the school, including the most able.
- Pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to diminish the differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally. The attainment and progress of this group of pupils are not tracked carefully enough to inform actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Outcomes for Year 11 pupils have been poor since the academy opened. As staff do not have an accurate understanding of pupils' starting points or the progress that they are making, many pupils have begun accredited courses that they have not completed. Pupils have not been adequately prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- As a result of inadequate teaching over time, poor assessment practice, limited tracking of pupils' achievement and low attendance, pupils currently in the school continue to make slow progress. However, as a result of actions taken by the current leadership team, teaching is beginning to improve and this is having a positive impact on the progress made by pupils who attend regularly. Variabilities in quality remain, but pupils make more consistent progress in mathematics and art and design than in other areas of the curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	140383
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10025157

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

Type of school	Short-stay school
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Simms
Headteacher	James Laidler
Telephone number	01905 763580
Website	www.newbridgeschool.org
Email address	newbridge@advancetrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Newbridge Secondary School is a small, short-stay school that caters for secondary-aged pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools. It is part of the Advance Trust, with Vale of Evesham School, Kingfisher School and Riversides School.
- The school became an academy in April 2014. When the predecessor school was inspected in April 2012, it was judged to be inadequate.
- There have been several changes to leadership since the academy formed. The executive principal, who joined the trust in September 2016, led the school from January 2017 until the current headteacher took up post in February 2017.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with social, emotional and mental health identified as their primary school support need. Very occasionally, pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan attend the school.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, supported by the pupil premium, is well above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national averages.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Archway Academy, Worcester Warriors and the Bridge Centre. Small groups of pupils attend short-term placements at the Building Block, Warndon Community Centre.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the curriculum, the use and impact of additional funding, school policies and equality objectives.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made short visits to several lessons throughout the inspection. All these observations took place with the headteacher. The lead inspector also visited a centre that provides alternative provision to pupils from the school.
- Members of the inspection team met with pupils and looked at examples of pupils' work in their books. Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive principal, the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and a representative of the trust.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through a very small number of letters, free-text responses on Parent View and telephone conversations.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan, information about managing teachers' performance and staff training records. Minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Paul Copping

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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