

# Excel and Exceed Centre

Buller Street, Bury, Lancashire BL8 2BS

## Inspection dates

26–28 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Sixth form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The leadership of the new headteacher has brought a sweeping change across the school. She has sharpened systems and laid a firm platform for the future.
- The school's caring culture is echoed by all. Teams of skilled and committed education and hospital staff work collaboratively to support pupils. This strong partnership ensures that pupils make a good recovery.
- The school is rigorous in keeping all pupils safe. Leaders are meticulous in ensuring that pupils receive superb care. Pupils' well-being and recovery are a priority for the whole staff team.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is well supported by independent careers guidance.
- Learners in the sixth form achieve well, and the provision is well led and managed.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Pupils trust staff and grow in confidence. They overcome personal barriers and achieve success in their learning.
- Leaders do not provide enough opportunities for staff to share good practice.
- Teachers plan their lessons to ensure that most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Their flexible approach and careful crafting ensures that the majority of pupils are not left behind.
- Teachers' skills are supported and strengthened with good professional development so that they can meet the needs of pupils well.
- Although attendance to education is improving, there are still too many pupils who linger on the wards and do not attend the education setting regularly enough.
- The head of education and the proprietor are well informed about the work of the school. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They hold leaders strongly to account and ensure that all the independent school standards are fully met.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - providing further opportunities for staff to share good practice and learn from each other
  - ensuring that all ward managers consistently apply, share and use effective procedures to support pupils' better attendance in the education setting.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The new headteacher has high expectations of all staff. She places the welfare of pupils at the centre of all her decisions. Consequently, she has systematically and swiftly sharpened systems in her quest to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. She recognises the barriers that pupils face but is rightly focused and determined to 'raise the bar' for all pupils in the provision. As a result, the school is improving rapidly.
- The headteacher has swiftly built professional relationships across the hospital which are based on shared goals and values. Staff who completed the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. All said that they are proud to work at the school.
- The headteacher has made significant changes and implemented a number of new systems across the school since her arrival. These are being implemented effectively and are having a rapid impact on pupils' development and personal progress. For example, leaders have recently strengthened their numeracy and literacy support programmes so there is a strong focus on enhancing pupils' basic skills.
- Staff in the education setting and the hospital share the same core values and vision in ensuring that pupils make a good recovery with their mental health. Staff work collaboratively in reaching decisions to support pupils' development in health and education. Local education board meetings provide a platform for hospital and education staff to collaborate and review systems and reshape the support for pupils. This approach is successful in ensuring that pupils make strides in their recovery.
- The school education officer is effective in gathering information about pupils' previous educational experiences to plan the next steps of their learning. As a result, staff are well informed and teachers prepare appropriate lessons to support pupils in their chosen courses.
- Leaders have ensured that staff receive appropriate professional development for their school setting. Staff have completed appropriate training in the management of challenging behaviour and how to address issues with pupils' mental health. As a result, staff are well equipped to support pupils and tackle challenging circumstances well. Teachers and staff also benefit from regular supervision to help them deal with the challenges of working with pupils with severe mental health difficulties.
- A high proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, a specialist officer provides valuable training for teachers and staff. For example, they have been supported to improve their practice and to learn about different special educational needs, such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder and autistic spectrum disorder.
- Pupils' progress is assessed and is regularly and closely monitored by leaders. A lesson-by-lesson assessment system tracks how well pupils are achieving and responding to teaching.
- The headteacher monitors the work of teachers in the school carefully. She regularly observes lessons and carries out detailed and accurate appraisals of all staff performance. Effective procedures for monitoring the performance of staff are fully in place. Staff targets are clear and linked to the school's priorities.

- The curriculum has been revised and adapted. It is fully responsive and flexible to meet the educational needs of all the pupils. Some pupils study GCSE examinations, while others study other accredited work. Staff ensure that there is a continual focus on promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills throughout all courses. This is to help to develop pupils' skills and aid their transition back into mainstream school.
- The school places great emphasis on teaching pupils of all ages about British values and life in modern society. The citizenship curriculum and the specially designed 'culture days' promote common values and develop a sense of social and moral responsibility.
- The head of education recently completed a full audit of leaders' work in relation to the independent school standards. Inspection evidence indicates that the conclusion of this audit that all standards are met is correct.

## **Governance**

- There is no governance as such in the school. The head of education is charged by the proprietor to oversee the work of the headteacher and the school along with the other hospital schools in the Cygnet Health Care Group. He provides valuable support for the headteacher and shares her vision for the school. The head of education regularly visits the school to observe lessons, look at pupils' work and evaluate the difference made to pupils' outcomes. He provides appropriate challenge and has successfully supported sweeping changes across the school.
- The proprietor ensures that national education board meetings are used to good effect to hold headteachers to account for pupils' education. The proprietor has a good knowledge of this school's strengths and its areas for further improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding influences everything that the school does. Pupils' safety is paramount to pupils' well-being and it is of the highest priority to all staff. Most pupils are very unwell and extremely vulnerable to risk of harm or self-harm. As a result, all staff are highly vigilant and alert to small changes or signals. They know the pupils well, and any safeguarding concerns are followed up quickly through strong systems at all levels.
- The headteacher has ensured that safeguarding procedures take account of the latest guidance, and the safeguarding policy reflects this. The school safeguarding policy is published on their website and is available to parents. Appropriate checks are completed before staff take up their appointments. Staff have a clear induction on their arrival to ensure that they fully understand the safeguarding procedures and the recent guidance relating to keeping pupils safe in education.
- Staff receive regular training in how to keep pupils safe during their time at the school. For example, a recent session on the 'Prevent' duty has boosted staff's knowledge so that they can spot and report any signs of concern.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers and staff are dedicated to improving pupils' life-chances. They get to know

pupils extremely well in a very short time and skilfully adapt activities, according to pupils' responses. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully with pupils' individual abilities in mind.

- Teachers draw on the information provided by home schools, but also carry out additional diagnostic assessments on arrival. This ensures that pupils follow work to support their home school's curriculum. Teachers monitor the progress made by pupils on a lesson-by-lesson basis and provide further support as needed to close any gaps in understanding.
- As required by the school's policy, most teachers provide useful verbal and some written feedback on pupils' work and progress. Some teachers craft their comments carefully and strike a good balance so that pupils are not overly self-critical.
- Teachers plan programmes of work which take into account pupils' abilities. Work is bespoke to each pupil's individual learning plan and supports their individual curriculum. Teachers are also quick to adapt their teaching in the face of pupils' daily changing needs.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively by teachers to support pupils. They support when they deem it suitable. They also have an acute understanding of when to step back to allow pupils to work with greater independence and to take more responsibility for their own learning. This approach builds confidence and much-needed self-esteem for pupils.
- The individual needs of each pupil are shared and communicated well through a number of effective systems within the school. As a result, staff understand pupils' personalities and individual needs. Staff use appropriate strategies to support pupils' progress academically and emotionally.
- Some staff do not make the most of opportunities to challenge the pupils. They are understandably mindful of not wanting to set a pupil back by pushing too hard. However, this approach sometimes errs on the side of being too cautious when pupils could actually achieve more.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff foster a caring culture and develop positive relationships with pupils. This helps pupils to cope at a time when they are particularly vulnerable. Staff encourage all pupils to share any concerns or worries that they may have.
- There is a strong focus on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Regular events and projects help pupils to develop skills, recover from illness and contemplate a positive future. Inspectors saw pupils developing their understanding and enjoying an event to celebrate Eid. Staff do not shy away from discussing challenging and thought-provoking material. For example, inspectors saw teachers encouraging pupils to discuss and understand the impact of terrorism attacks.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the dangers and risks of using the internet and mobile communications. All pupils receive training about how to stay safe online. Pupils are always closely supervised when using the internet.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Nearly all pupils behave well and try hard to participate in order to catch up with their previously lost learning. Challenging behaviour is rare. New and improved behaviour systems have cemented an improving trend of better behaviour across the school.
- Fresh reward systems have reinvigorated pupils back into education from the ward. Pupils told inspectors how they like earning points towards gaining shopping vouchers.
- Staff and pupils confirmed with inspectors that there is no evidence of bullying or harassment in any part of the school.
- Staff deploy a plethora of strategies to engage pupils back into the education setting. As a result, most pupils attend education whenever they can. Despite staff efforts, some pupils linger on the wards and attendance to education remains hugely variable. Not all ward managers foster a culture of strong attendance. This aspect of the school's work remains a key priority for the headteacher and healthcare leaders.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- When pupils are admitted to the school, they have typically missed a lot of education. For some pupils, their ability to learn has been impaired by their poor mental health. As a result, most pupils are working at a lower level than their ability. The school focuses on helping pupils to catch up, regain their confidence, acquire skills and, where possible, gain qualifications.
- Pupils start school at various times during the school year. They stay for different lengths of time, ranging from a few weeks to several months. Due to these variations, it is not possible to compare pupils' progress and attainment with those of other groups of pupils nationally.
- Pupils have the opportunity to gain skills and qualifications to assist their transition back into their mainstream or home school. As a result, this restores faith in their ability to achieve and succeed and opens the floodgates to further future possibilities.
- Pupils have access to books that develop their reading and make them think about the wider world. Some pupils successfully take part in reading and numeracy recovery programmes to bridge the gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils across the school have wide-ranging medical needs and abilities. Nearly all require the most sheltered learning environment and a lot of one-to-one staff support. Although most pupils follow a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs, the most important indicator of their progress is their success in returning to their home schools with positive attitudes to re-engage with education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff. This is because staff are provided with effective guidance and training from the Cygnet Health Care specialist – a national SEN case officer for Cygnet schools. She informs staff of pupils' needs and provides them with clear strategies to support these, so pupils' barriers to learning are removed. Consequently, this has led to improved progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The use of additional funding is effective.

- Leaders' analysis of pupils' current performance shows that all groups of pupils make at least good progress compared to their starting points, length of stay and complexities.
- A planned and coordinated programme of careers education helps pupils to make informed choices about their next steps in education. However, for many pupils, the lack of basic qualifications and emotional stability affects their post-16 qualification choices.

## Sixth form provision

**Good**

- The sixth-form provision has developed and evolved. There is now a dedicated leader with responsibility for teaching and learning and the 16 to 19 study programmes. She has ensured that the school provides a flexible and dedicated curriculum to suit the needs of an ever-changing, wide range of students.
- Teachers ensure that they are well prepared for and highly committed to the varied demands of the curriculum. They work hard to seek out and develop their knowledge and expertise so that they can effectively support students across a wide variety of courses. As a result, students are confident in their teachers and make good progress with their courses.
- Some non-qualification subjects are provided through the support of the hospital occupational therapists, who carefully assess and match learners' needs to appropriate activities. As a result, some students take part in cookery and sporting activities. Those students who are well enough are able to experience some volunteer work at a local care home.
- Nearly all students are highly engaged in their individualised programmes of study and make good progress from their starting points. Leaders ensure that for those students for whom it is appropriate, they are well supported to resit GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. Some make successful transitions to their home school or college.
- Staff build strong relationships with students. Consequently, attendance in the sixth form is positive and attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Students are safe and well cared for and treat staff with respect.
- School leaders and staff take careful consideration of students' progress and make sure that they have the chance to repeat Year 11, take suitable external examinations and, where appropriate, build up their confidence in English and mathematics by taking functional skills qualifications.
- Independent careers advice is provided termly by an independent careers adviser. Staff also instil ambition among students and talk about next steps in education. They support students in the completion of curriculum vitae and help them to practise writing letters of application. Staff make contact with colleges and also provide a few students with information for university. All complete a careers course, 'Making Informed Career Choices', so that they are clear about their future options.
- Students take part in citizenship lessons and experience culture days to ensure that they are prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, a recent culture day was based around celebrating different religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Christianity.

## School details

Unique reference number	142675
DfE registration number	351/6004
Inspection number	10034042

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Tier 4 community adolescent mental health inpatient provision
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	12 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	15
Proprietor	Nicky McLeod
Headteacher	Jennifer Almond
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,120
Telephone number	0161 762 7212
Website	<a href="https://www.cygnethealth.co.uk/locations/cygnet-hospital-bury/excel-exceed-school/">https://www.cygnethealth.co.uk/locations/cygnet-hospital-bury/excel-exceed-school/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:jenniferalmond@cygnethealth.co.uk">jenniferalmond@cygnethealth.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Excel and Exceed Centre is part of a nationwide collective of hospital schools owned by Cygnet Health Care Limited. It is a specialist provider of education for pupils and learners with diagnosed mental health conditions. Pupils and learners attend the school from different local authorities across the country.
- Cygnet Health Care Limited purchased Alpha Hospitals in September 2016 and took over responsibility to provide education for young people aged between 12 and 19 who are either undergoing mental health assessments or are receiving treatment. The headteacher joined the school in January 2017.



- The aim of the school is to 'provide equal access to high quality education for all children and young people with mental health needs, keeping education alive in pupils' lives, maintaining progress and enabling them to achieve their potential whilst in hospital.'
- Most pupils and students remain dual-registered in their time at the school. Pupils' home school sometimes provides work to complete in addition to the timetable offered by the Excel and Exceed Centre. Pupils and students are taught in classrooms within the school and occasionally on the wards. The length of time pupils and learners are with the school varies from one week to several months. On average, they attend for between six and eight weeks.
- Pupils and students join the school with a wide range of needs and abilities. A high number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some are in the care of local authorities. The school does not receive additional money through the pupil premium funding.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across all key stages of the school and looked at a range of pupils' work. Two therapy lessons led by the occupational therapist were also observed. For safety reasons, all lessons were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the head of education, the school education officer, school staff, hospital staff, members of the local education board, the Cygnet Health Care specialist – the national SEN case officer for Cygnet schools – and the school's leader for the provision for 16 to 19 students.
- The inspector viewed all education classrooms and outdoor spaces, and visited wards where pupils were based after school hours. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector spoke with a few pupils from mixed key stages about their experience of school and their learning. Inspectors also observed pupils' conduct and behaviour throughout the school day.
- The inspector took account of the school's own pupils' survey information and considered the views of parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View. Consideration was also given to all staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- During the inspection, the inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised data about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, examined pupils' work, looked at documents used by leaders to monitor the school's work and reviewed minutes of meetings of the local education board and national education board. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was scrutinised, and detailed consideration was given to policies and practices relating to safeguarding and to how the school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

## Inspection team

Dawn Platt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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