

Black Country Wheels School

Units 3 & 4, Gainsborough Trading Estate, Rufford Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 7ND

Inspection dates

7–9 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has created a culture based on the social care principles of nurture, value and respect. There is a strong emphasis on building self-esteem and self-confidence. As a result, pupils make progress academically, socially and emotionally.
- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. All of the pupils have experienced disruption to their education. On arrival, their starting points are considerably low. Teaching enables them to quickly catch up and make, in some cases, accelerated progress.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use information from previous schools well to plan engaging lessons matched to the ability of the majority of pupils. For a small number of the most able pupils, some of the work leading to Asdan awards lacks challenge.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good. There are high expectations around conduct. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps through good, impartial careers advice supported by the local authority.
- Attendance for some pupils is low. The school works effectively with parents and external agencies to promote good attendance. For some pupils, this extensive work has improved attendance. For a small number of pupils, attendance remains low.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have worked hard to develop the curriculum since the last inspection. Pupils can study core subjects and access vocational learning in mechanics and construction. Pupils also study citizenship, personal, social, health and economic (PHSE) education, history, geography and physical education.
- Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. A safe culture has been established through appropriately trained staff who are clear on their responsibilities. The curriculum also teaches pupils how to look after themselves. As a result, pupils feel safe and they are safe.

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?

- Improve the progress of the most able pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers' questioning effectively deepens their understanding
 - the work set provides the appropriate level of challenge
 - wider opportunities are available for higher-level learners.
- Continue to improve the attendance of a small group of pupils by:
 - identifying particular barriers to low attendance
 - continuing to work with parents to encourage high attendance
 - maintaining links with external agencies to provide additional support.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and have worked hard since the last inspection to improve the breadth and balance of the curriculum. Pupils have lessons in English, mathematics, land-based science, history, citizenship and geography. The school is well resourced, with mechanics and construction workshops in which pupils can gain relevant qualifications. Leaders have also developed the curriculum to include higher-level qualifications in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum has been further enriched with extensive opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. These opportunities have been built into the formal curriculum and have impacted on pupils' understanding of the wider world. Pupils have participated in a range of educational visits, including to local churches, mosques and a Sikh temple. Pupils have also participated in a community project where they cleaned the graves of Second World War soldiers. Pupils learn about different cultures in geography and in food technology sessions. They taste different foods, such as Italian and Indian. Pupils also grow fresh vegetables and herbs to use in cookery sessions. The school works hard to broaden life experiences for pupils. Pupils say that the school develops them as a 'whole person'.
- Leaders consistently promote British values. Pupils show respect for one another and adults. They respond quickly to adults' requests. They understand right from wrong and take a 'zero tolerance' approach to views that are disrespectful or derogatory. Pupils know that good behaviour is expected.
- The PHSE curriculum contributes to personal well-being through carefully planned sessions linked to the needs of pupils. Pupils learn about budgeting, finding a job and preparing for interviews and family responsibilities. They also learn how to keep themselves safe through lessons on physical health and addictions, reducing the risk of disease and preventing accidents. Pupils also support charitable organisations and regularly host coffee mornings within the local community to raise money for cancer research.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have access to the full curriculum. Teachers use previous information effectively to plan tasks that enable pupils to make progress. Teachers provide additional support, including one-to-one working, small-group work, additional literacy and numeracy support and use of specialised equipment such as reading overlays. Leaders carefully plan lessons to meet the needs set out in pupils' education, health and care plans and learners make progress through appropriate support.
- The headteacher has a background in social care and has used its principles to develop a culture of trust based on positive relationships, nurture and support. The impact on pupils' holistic development is significant. Pupils recognise that their self-confidence has increased and they feel valued and respected as individuals. Pupils speak highly of the headteacher. They value their education and the opportunities they have been given that

they have not previously had.

- Leaders have worked hard since the last inspection to develop the consistency of teaching and learning. New teachers have been supported with planning engaging lessons, through lesson observations, peer observations and the opportunities to team teach alongside experienced practitioners. This has had a positive impact on teaching. As a result, pupils are engaged fully in all areas of the curriculum, and the consistency of teaching has improved. Leaders have an accurate view of teaching and learning.
- The headteacher is a highly supportive leader. Staff have been given opportunities to attend training in their specific subjects and they value the opportunities to develop professionally. Daily staff briefings reflect on the previous day and are used well to plan learning. There is also a focus on the well-being of both pupils and staff. As a result, staff feel valued.
- Leaders have introduced a reading scheme linked closely to the interests of pupils. Reading age is assessed on arrival. The average reading age is 10 years. Books are carefully chosen and matched appropriately to the pupil's reading age. Pupils read aloud with confidence and fluency and say that their reading skills have improved. Teachers encourage recall of phonics to break down and sound out difficult words. Pupils read for meaning and are able to make accurate predictions in the text. School information shows that the majority of pupils have made good progress and have improved their reading ages. In some cases, pupils are reading at their chronological age.
- Parents' views of leaders are highly positive. They say that pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics and value the communication they receive from the school. Parents say that education matches the needs and abilities of pupils and that the environment is supportive and caring. They say that the school has been very beneficial for their child. As a result, all parents would recommend the school to others. The school has not received any complaints.

Governance

- Governance is effective.
- Governance is newly established. The recently appointed chair is a former pupil who understands the school fully and what it aims to achieve, as well as understanding what works well for pupils. The chair is also a local businessman who has provided employment opportunities for previous pupils.
- The headteacher is also supported by a school consultant. The school has firm plans to engage with other schools of a similar kind.
- Meetings are focused on school improvement. Governors are ambitious and challenging for all pupils and have a clear, accurate understanding of where the school needs to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central register meets requirements.
- Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding through appropriately trained, highly

vigilant staff who are clear on their responsibilities and able to recognise signs of abuse and neglect or pupils who are at risk of exploitation or radicalisation. Procedures are robust. All staff know how to report concerns. Leaders and staff work closely with the local authority to support pupils who are at risk or who have a multi-agency plan.

- Staff know their pupils well. They recognise differences in behaviours and are quick to react and follow procedures. Nothing is left to chance when considering the safety of the pupils.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The school engages with a local theatre company, which delivers sessions on bullying, sexual exploitation and grooming.
- Pupils learn about all types of bullying and how to stay safe online and gain an awareness of risks and dangers. Pupils also know about the risks of radicalisation and extremism and all stated that they would tell staff if they were worried about their peers.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they are safe. Pupils say that teachers know them well and that there is always someone to talk to if they need help. The school is seen as a safe haven where pupils can come if they have problems. On occasion, pupils return to school after the school day has ended to talk to staff if they have concerns. They trust staff and know that they will be there to help them.
- There is a comprehensive risk assessment policy, and staff have worked hard to identify risks and ensure safe working practices. Risk assessment for practical areas are appropriate and detailed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations for all pupils. As a result of well-established routines, pupils arrive in class on time and settle quickly to tasks. Daily tutorial sessions are used effectively to practise literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils engage well in spelling activities and participate in a daily spelling competition. School information shows that, over time, this activity has developed pupils' spelling, handwriting and mathematical skills. Work in books also shows that spelling has improved over time.
- Teachers embed literacy and numeracy well into practical subjects. Pupils calculate angles when completing roofing projects, prepare quotes for building work and use accurate measuring skills. They use descriptive language fluently when planning menus in food technology and also learn about the principles of physics in mechanics when learning how engines work.
- Teachers use highly effective questioning skills to deepen pupils' understanding and secure learning. They have secure subject knowledge and, as a result, plan exciting and motivating lessons. Teachers identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind and quickly reshape tasks to enable them to catch up. As a result, pupils engage well and make progress across the curriculum.
- Some staff members in the practical areas of the curriculum are former pupils. They have secure subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the school's aims and the needs of the pupils. They know the challenges experienced by pupils and, as a result, have developed positive relationships that support and encourage pupils to do well. They are role models and are well respected by pupils.

- Teachers use information from previous schools to plan learning for pupils. Teaching for the majority of pupils is well matched to their needs and abilities. On rare occasions, for the most able pupils, some of the work lacks challenge, in particular work leading to Asdan awards is at too low a level to provide sufficient challenge. There are a small number of learners who would benefit from higher-level learning opportunities. In English and mathematics, the level of challenge is appropriate for all learners. Pupils say that the work is tough and makes them think.
- In English, work is matched appropriately to the needs of all learners. Pupils develop skills in skimming texts, highlighting important information and summarising. Books show that writing has developed over time, improving in content, accuracy and fluency. Pupils' grammar has developed in sophistication over time and pupils are keen to share their ideas with others.
- In mathematics, teachers use effective questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and promote higher-level thinking. The majority of pupils have made progress since their starting points and are working on higher-level mathematical problems. They are clear on what they need to do and know where they need to improve. Teachers link mathematical concepts to practical examples, such as area and perimeter in construction. Pupils say this helps them to understand some of the more difficult tasks. Pupils' responses showed that their learning was secure.
- Homework is carefully planned and is based on areas that pupils need to improve. Pupils value this opportunity and say that it helps them to catch up with things they have missed. Through regular completion of homework, pupils commit to improving their skills.
- The school engages well with parents through partnership working and regular communication. Parents value this communication and say they receive regular updates on how their child is progressing.
- Pupils' views of school are highly positive. They value their achievements and say that this is the first time many of them have sat and passed examinations. They say that teachers know them well and help them to do well. They feel that they benefit from working in small groups and through one-to-one support when needed. When asked to describe the school in only three words, typical responses were 'a wonderful place' and 'learning is good'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils reflect on improvements in their own behaviour. They say that school has taught them how to respect others and that they take a 'zero tolerance' approach to disrespect and negative behaviour towards others. Pupils say that their confidence has increased. They say they could not take part in discussions with adults before coming to the school.
- Learning takes place in a safe learning environment. Pupils arrive on time and settle quickly into well-established routines. Daily tutorial sessions provide an opportunity for pupils to reflect on the previous day and focus on the day ahead. Pupils value this and say that every day gives them a fresh start and the opportunity to put things right.

- The school works hard to build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Teachers use praise and encouragement effectively to reward pupils' efforts. For many pupils, these achievements are the first they have experienced.
- Relationships are highly positive. Staff know pupils well. A supportive culture has been established where teachers are aware of pupils' difficulties and work hard to support them.
- Peer work and group working is highly effective. Pupils are helpful and supportive of each other and engage well in discussions.
- The school works with the local authority to provide impartial careers advice. Pupils value this support and some have made firm career choices based on their experiences within vocational areas at the school. The local authority says that leaders are proactive in ensuring that pupils move on to further education, employment and training.
- For some pupils, attendance is low. However, it is an improvement on previous placements. The school engages well with parents, the local authority and external agencies, and the headteacher and other staff visit pupils at home. The local authority also monitors pupils' attendance closely. For some pupils, the impact of this work has been beneficial and attendance over time has improved. For a few pupils, attendance remains low.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school has employed a school nurse who visits the school regularly. The nurse provides one-to-one support for pupils and also delivers group sessions on sex and relationships education and drugs and alcohol awareness. Pupils say that they know how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- There is a comprehensive behaviour policy, which is used consistently by staff and understood by pupils. Pupils are motivated by the policy and feel that it helps to promote good behaviour. As a result, pupils say behaviour is good because they know what is expected of them.
- Behaviour in lessons is positive. Pupils arrive on time and settle quickly into learning as a result of well-established routines. They engage in appropriate discussions and respond quickly to adult requests. There are high expectations about conduct in and around lessons. Consequently, behaviour during breaks and at lunchtime is also good.
- Incidents of negative behaviour are extremely rare. If negative incidents do occur, pupils say they are resolved quickly and do not have an impact on the school day. Pupils say that teachers know when something is wrong and give them time and space to talk about problems.
- Pupils say bullying is rare. They have learned about all types of bullying, including physical, verbal, homophobic and cyber bullying, and say it does not happen. They say they are confident that staff would resolve any issues quickly.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Pupils arrive at the school having experienced disruption to previous learning. Many have been permanently excluded, and all have had significant gaps in their education. As a result, starting points for all pupils are considerably below those typical for their age.
- The work in pupils' books shows that they are making outstanding progress, particularly in English and mathematics. This is the case for pupils in all groups, including the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's assessment information is accurate. Information from previous schools shows that pupils' starting points are low. However, through targeted intervention, small-group work and one-to-one support, they catch up quickly and in some cases make rapid and sustained progress. All current pupils have progressed from their starting points in English and mathematics to level 1 and level 2 functional skills qualifications in both subjects. Some pupils have also been able to sit examinations a year earlier than expected.
- Across the curriculum, pupils are making outstanding progress. Work in practical areas and through Asdan awards is completed to a high standard. On occasion, the most able complete this work quickly and would benefit from higher-level learning opportunities. Leaders have plans to develop such qualifications across the curriculum.
- Pupils recognise gains in their social and emotional development and communication skills. They say that their self-confidence has increased and they are able to meet new people and participate in formal discussions. They say they could not do this prior to coming to the school.

School details

Unique reference number	137571
DfE registration number	332/6007
Inspection number	10006094

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Ms Janet Lear
Chair	Mitch Bellis
Headteacher	Ms Janet Lear
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,000
Telephone number	0121 522 3717
Website	www.bcwschool.co.uk
Email address	clare.dulson@bcwschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2012

Information about this school

- Black Country Wheels School provides education for pupils aged 14 to 16 with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. All of the pupils have experienced disruption to learning and the majority have been excluded from previous settings or are at risk of exclusion.
- The school is registered for 100 pupils. Currently there are 31 pupils on roll who access a full-time timetable.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

- The school was previously inspected in October 2012 and judged to be satisfactory. A progress monitoring inspection took place on 22 October 2013.
- The school aims to provide a positive learning experience for pupils in their final school years. The curriculum enables pupils to access both core subjects and vocational opportunities, leading to recognised qualifications. The school also works with pupils to develop their social skills and build self-esteem, preparing them well for their next phase in life.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, land-based science, citizenship and construction across both Year 10 and Year 11.
- The inspector heard pupils read.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, chair of governors and the school consultant, as well as other key staff members and a group of pupils.
- The inspector met with the lead commissioner for the local authority that places pupils at the school.
- The inspector reviewed work in books across a range of subject areas, including mathematics, English, history and PHSE.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school policies, including safeguarding, behaviour, curriculum, complaints, health and safety and attendance.
- The inspector also reviewed key documentation, including pupil progress records, attendance records, the admissions register, safeguarding records and a number of risk assessments.
- The inspector also considered feedback from parents. There were two responses on Parent View.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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