

Newbridge Short Stay Secondary School

Midland Road, Worcester, Worcestershire WR5 1DS

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils make inadequate progress in a wide range of subjects in key stages 3 and 4.
- Leaders have struggled to overcome a legacy of underachievement and poor behaviour. Over time, leaders have not taken sufficient action to raise standards.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Ineffective use of assessment leads to most pupils making poor progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not make strong enough progress. Additional funding is not used effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is poor. This is because too much teaching is ineffective, and the school's behaviour policy is not consistently applied.
- A poor curriculum has led to inadequate outcomes for pupils. Leaders are making improvements to this, but the curriculum is not currently effective.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is weak. As a result, pupils do not have a clear idea of the difference between their own and others' rights and responsibilities.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, governors and staff are determined to improve the school and have made some good initial steps. For instance, all pupils in key stage 4 are now following appropriate courses that lead to GCSEs or their equivalent.
- Pupils following vocational courses at a local college are making good progress and behave well.
- Attendance is improving, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan are well supported by staff and their outcomes are improving.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - building on recent improvements to the curriculum so that it is appropriate for pupils' needs and pupils make good progress in all subjects
 - ensuring that accurate information is used to judge the progress that pupils make
 - ensuring that staff consistently implement the school's behaviour policy
 - developing the school's new systems of monitoring so that inconsistencies in teaching are eradicated
 - ensuring that the additional pupil premium funding is accessed and used to support disadvantaged pupils to make good progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - making sure that teaching plans suitably challenge pupils of all abilities, including the most able pupils and those with SEND but who do not have an EHC plan.
 - ensuring that staff use accurate information about pupils' prior attainment when planning lessons and activities
 - ensuring greater consistency across subjects.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour so that pupils behave better and understand how to learn more productively
 - ensuring that pupils' attendance continues to rise
 - improving pupils' ability to understand how to stay healthy
 - improving pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and helping them to understand their responsibilities as well as their rights.

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 have not yet overcome a legacy of underachievement. The standard of education is not acceptable. There are serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and as a consequence pupil outcomes are inadequate. Staff do not implement the school's behaviour policy well and so there is too much poor disruptive behaviour in lessons.
- Leaders have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. For example, they have introduced demonstrable improvements to the curriculum. It is broad and balanced and gives pupils the chance to enter high-quality GCSE examinations. All pupils now do so. However, too much of the curriculum does not allow pupils to make strong progress. For example, there is inadequate planning in English. In mathematics, planning is stronger.
- The leadership team and governing body are new in post having been appointed since the previous inspection. Leaders have worked well with governors and the trust to stabilise the school and act with coordinated determination. Staff morale is high. There are new systems for monitoring the consistency of teaching. However, this has yet to result in sustained improvement in all areas of the school's provision.
- Leaders, governors and the trust have a clear vision for the school and a determination to tackle the weaknesses. They are working with the local authority to change the school's designation from a short stay school to a provider of alternative education to key stage 4 pupils only. This clarity of mission has not yet led to consistently effective provision.
- Leaders have improved pupils' attendance from a low base. Persistent absence is falling, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Some pupils behave inappropriately and this impedes the learning of others. Staff interventions are sometimes slow and ineffective. Quieter pupils tolerate the unpredictable and volatile behaviour of a minority.
- Over time there have been serious inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in the application of effective behaviour management. The school's leadership have been addressing these with limited success. Leaders have not yet developed a secure means of using information from pupils' previous schools to build an accurate picture of pupils' abilities on arrival. This weakens teaching plans and hinders pupils' progress.
- Professional development is beginning to be used successfully to improve the standard of teaching in some subject areas, for example mathematics. However, it is not yet securely established. A new system for monitoring teaching has been introduced but it is too early to judge its effectiveness.
- Teachers' planning, though improving, does not adequately build on pupils' prior attainment. Assessment information is not used effectively. There is insufficient teaching that takes into account pupils' different abilities.
- The additional pupil premium funding has not been used effectively. Moreover, leaders have not accessed the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils that they are entitled to.

- Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND are supported with detailed and appropriate plans. These are consistently applied. Pupils with an EHC plan are making effective progress. Others are not because teaching does not challenge them effectively.
- Leadership of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not yet effective. For example, leaders help pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. However, where this is less successful, staff do not help pupils understand the balance between their rights and personal responsibilities. Consequently, a minority of pupils do not behave well enough.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is new. All members have been appointed since the last inspection. They have set to work with determination and ensured that the new leadership of the school is supported and challenged appropriately. The frustrating pace of change is not an indication of lack of capacity but an indication of the extent of the school's challenges.
- Governors and trustees work closely with school leaders. For example, their self-evaluation of the provision at the school is accurate. However, this has yet to lead to sustained improvement in outcomes for pupils.
- Governors have a clear vision for the school and a determination to tackle its weaknesses. Governors are working with the trust and the local authority to change the school's designation from a short stay school to a provider of alternative education for key stage 4 pupils. However, their clarity of mission has not yet led to consistently strong provision.
- The executive headteacher and chair of governors work particularly well together. Governors' guidance, performance management arrangements and questioning of the school's quality are robust, regular and determined. However, their partnership is recent and so has not yet led to deep-rooted improvements. Their grasp of the issues facing the school is clear.
- Governors, leaders and the trust have ensured that the school is safe. Pupils' welfare is their top priority. For example, pupils' care plans are well monitored, and school safeguarding leaders are accountable to governors for maintaining safety. Governors have commissioned external reviews of safeguarding and implement their recommendations thoroughly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have put in place successful safeguarding systems. Pre-employment checks are sound. Record-keeping is efficient and helps staff get the information they need to act promptly.
- Staff successfully manage cases of high-risk behaviour. Leaders work well with agencies in the local authority to support pupils and make sure that they are safe at school. Pupils speak highly of the help they receive.
- Staff understand the care needed to help pupils with SEND. They regularly plan and review pupils' safety, for example, making detailed and effective preparations for pupils when they visit off-site learning venues.

- Leaders make sure that staff understand how to report, monitor and review any concerns they have for pupils' safety inside and outside of school. Staff are well trained and so meet their responsibilities required by statutory guidance. For example, staff discharge their 'Prevent' duties well. Staff understand the legal requirements to report female genital mutilation and have strong systems for helping pupils who are at risk of missing education.
- The governing body and the trust review the safeguarding work of the school frequently and commission external reviews where necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently effective. Thus, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- In English, for example, work is often incomplete, poorly planned and lacks challenge. Too much of the teaching is aimless and keeps pupils busy rather than helping them to learn. In science, pupils' workbooks show haphazard activities that are not well planned.
- Assessment does not make use of high-quality baseline assessment information. Although leaders assess pupils' abilities when they first arrive at the school, staff do not use this information to help them plan.
- Teaching uses a three-step process of assessment that the school calls 'emerging, developing, secure'. This is an improvement, since it offers structure and clarity to assessment. However, it is too early to say whether it is effective, and at present it is inconsistently used across the school,
- Leaders' capacity to raise the standard of teaching is evident in mathematics. Pupils are proud of their work in their books. They follow up on feedback given by teachers. They work hard. They make effective progress, for example in key stage 4 examination practices. The teaching of mathematics is better planned and more challenging than in other subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving. Pupils attend school with increasing regularity. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and that most teachers give them help and support.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are appropriately qualified, and staffing is now more stable. It is too early, however, for this to have had an impact on the quality of teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Too many pupils do not respect the school environment, the staff or their peers.
- Pupils often struggle to accept the school's expectations. Frequently, pupils' educational history has been highly disrupted. Staff have had to use a high number of physical restraints and are appropriately trained for this. Over the past year, the number of restraints has fallen as staff become more skilled.

- Too many pupils lack the confidence to engage in lessons because other pupils' behaviour is excessively loud and demonstrative. Quieter pupils put up with interruptions and this disturbs their learning.
- A high proportion of pupils have not learned how to do without mid-lesson breaks. Frequently pupils walk around outside lessons aimlessly. When this happens, they are accompanied by staff who ensure their safety and welfare.
- Teaching activities that promote pupils' physical well-being are poorly planned. Physical education is not sufficiently engaging or challenging for pupils and so they do not enjoy their lessons. Consequently, this aspect of the school's curriculum is weak.
- In careers, however, there is demonstrable positive change. Pupils value the careers education they receive. Some pupils have clear and ambitious plans for their future, especially those who have been on college courses that the school has arranged. Pupils said, for example, they want to start their own business using the skills they had learned at college.
- Pupils have learned how to use the internet safely. They understand why the school has put secure limits on how it is used.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Staff have inconsistent expectations of pupils' behaviour. Some staff tolerate significant classroom disruption. However, there is an improving picture and pupils say that behaviour is getting better.
- Too much learning is weakened by poorly managed behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance remains low but as a result of leaders' actions it is improving. Persistent absence is still too high, but has improved for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- Staff are open to support from their line managers and are eager to improve their behaviour management practice. Leaders help them develop their skills. As a result, over time, the use of restraint and incidences of significantly poor behaviour are reducing.
- The school environment is generally clean and tidy. There is some litter in classrooms, this is particularly the case when teaching does not engage pupils and they become distracted.
- Leaders have well-considered plans and procedures for managing pupils' behaviour. Now that staffing has been stabilised, there are early signs that these are being used more consistently. A minority of staff remain too lenient. Their expectations of pupils' behaviour are too low and they are slow to tackle poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' progress is weak in a wide range of subjects including English and science. This is because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not good and pupils' behaviour is inconsistently managed. Pupils' make stronger progress in mathematics because teaching successfully matches lesson activities to pupils' abilities.

- Leaders and staff are not consistently using pupils' prior attainment information well enough. This results in pupils not making good progress. Leaders' work with the local authority to improve the transfer of information about pupils' abilities has not yet been successful.
- Leaders use a baseline assessment they have designed because pupils start the school at different times in the school year and sometimes after extended periods of absence. However, teachers are not using this information well enough, except in mathematics.
- All pupils in key stage 3 follow a clear plan for their reading. It is too early to say that this is having a secure and consistent impact on pupils' progress.
- All pupils in Years 10 and 11 are entered for GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. This represents a demonstrable improvement in the school's curriculum. Pupils who attend the local college for some of their learning in key stage 4 make good progress in a range of vocational subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making good progress. Leaders and governors have not been able to secure the additional funding for all these pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are not receiving the support that would enable them to make better progress.
- The most able pupils are not making good progress because they are not challenged sufficiently. Those with SEND also fail to make good progress in many lessons. However, the special educational needs coordinator ensures that pupils' EHC plans are reviewed appropriately. Consequently, the pupils with EHC plans are making stronger progress over time. This is most notable in mathematics.
- Almost all pupils who left the school at the end of Year 11 in 2018 went on to high-quality education or training. This demonstrates an improvement in the way they are prepared for the next stage in their education or training.

School details

Unique reference number	140383
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10088448

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	52
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Phillip Siegert
Headteacher	James Laidler
Telephone number	01905 763580
Website	www.newbridgeschool.org
Email address	newbridge@advancetrust.org
Date of previous inspection	7–8 March 2017

Information about this school

- Newbridge Secondary School is a much smaller than average, short stay school. It provides for secondary-aged pupils who have been permanently excluded from schools over a wide area. The school is part of the Advance Trust, with Vale of Evesham School, Kingfisher School and Riversides School.
- The school became an academy in April 2014. At the previous inspection the school was judged inadequate.
- There have been many changes to leadership since the previous inspection. The governing body has been entirely reconstituted. Middle leaders are all new in post. The headteacher and executive principal were in post at the time of the previous inspection.
- A high proportion of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with social, emotional and mental health identified as their primary need. A small number of these pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. The additional funding for this group of pupils is not always transferred from the pupils' previous schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a wide variety of subjects. Many of these observations took place jointly with the headteacher. Pupils workbooks were scrutinised in these observations.
- The inspection team met with pupils and spoke to them formally and informally.
- Inspectors met with the executive principal, the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body who represented the Trust. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through a small number of letters. There were insufficient responses to Parent View from parents and no responses from pupils.
- A wide variety of school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan, information about managing teachers' performance and staff development records. Minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed. Safeguarding documents were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Linda McGill

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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