

# Bridge Short Stay School

Wissage Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 6SW

## Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

<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>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors provide strong leadership, which is valued by the staff and pupils. Staff morale is high.
- Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They are clear about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have taken effective action to address identified weaknesses.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and contributes well to pupils' academic progress and personal development. However, leaders recognise that, for this to continue, they need to regularly refine the curriculum to make sure that it meets the needs of the changing cohort.
- Senior leaders have refined the assessment system effectively. They use the information collected to quickly identify pupils who need extra help to support their learning.
- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is good. However, pupils are given limited opportunities to write at length.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Questioning is used effectively in some lessons and helps to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, this good use of questioning is not consistent across the school.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Pastoral care of pupils in the school and in alternative provision is highly effective.
- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and at unstructured times. When incidents do occur, staff use restorative solutions well to re-engage pupils in their learning.
- Safeguarding is a particular strength of the school. The school uses a wide range of external providers effectively to support those pupils and families in need of additional help.
- Many pupils successfully move to either mainstream or specialist provision, according to their needs.
- Pupils are carefully prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Although improving, attendance is lower than the national average and persistent absence is above the national average.

## **Full report**

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

- Work with parents and carers to improve the attendance of pupils who continue to be regularly absent so that these pupils make better progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by ensuring that:
  - questioning is used effectively in lessons to help pupils learn in greater depth
  - pupils are given more opportunities to write at length.
- Leaders continue to refine the curriculum to respond to the pupils' changing needs and ensure that they continue to be prepared well for the next stage in their education.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision for the school. He is supported by skilled, committed leaders and a highly effective management board. Leaders have established a caring, nurturing ethos for all members of the school community.
- Leaders have high expectations and are strongly committed to improving all aspects of the school's work. They have accurately prioritised key areas for further development and have acted to address the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection.
- Leaders use professional development well to encourage, challenge and support the development of teachers' skills. This is contributing to the continuous improvement in the quality of teaching. Staff value this training.
- Leaders routinely monitor the quality of alternative provision. They have ensured that the high-quality care given to pupils at the school is matched in alternative provision. Additional rigour has been added to the process by the appointment of an outreach learning mentor who regularly visits the pupils at the alternative provision. Staff at the alternative provision value the support the school gives to them. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum. The curriculum is broad and balanced. In the primary phase, it covers all aspects of the national curriculum through the delivery of literacy and numeracy and the creative curriculum. Together with 'circle time', which helps to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health, this ensures that pupils are prepared well for either their return to mainstream provision or to specialist provision, according to their needs.
- In the secondary phase, accredited courses are offered in both academic and vocational subjects. The flexibility of the curriculum enables pupils to complete courses they may have started in their mainstream school so that no learning time is lost.
- At key stage 3, there is a strong focus on behaviour for learning to support pupils to re-engage in their learning. At key stage 4, the aim is to prepare pupils well for post-16 and give them the qualifications they need to go on to appropriate provision.
- Leaders recognise, however, that with the changing cohort of pupils come changing needs. Consequently, they continually evaluate and review the curriculum to ensure that it continues to meet pupils' needs. In September, for example, science will be added to enhance the secondary curriculum.
- The wider curriculum contributes well to pupils' mental, physical and personal well-being, their safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Topics in personal, social, health and economic education include preventing radicalisation and extremism. An assembly seen during the inspection helped to teach secondary pupils about the effects of smoking on their physical health and financial well-being. Assembly themes are then followed up with discussion in tutor time.
- Additional funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils. For example, pupils have been offered additional support and activities, including mentoring, one-to-one

support and outdoor education trips. As a result, there are no discernible differences in outcomes for different groups.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is a strength of the school. The members of the management board are highly committed to the school and are striving for staff and pupils.
- Governors have a wide range of appropriate experience and expertise. This enables them to effectively fulfil their role as a critical friend to the school by providing an appropriate mix of support and challenge to leaders.
- Governors share leaders' vision to provide a high-quality provision for their pupils. For example, they worked collaboratively with leaders to secure the move of the primary provision to a new site in September. This has the potential to improve the learning environment for primary pupils and provide additional space for an inclusion hub for secondary pupils.
- Governors take their safeguarding duties seriously. The named governor for safeguarding has effectively contributed to leaders' strategic plans for further improvements in this aspect of the school's work. As a result, the school offers a high quality of care and support for its pupils and their families.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective in both the school and in alternative provision.
- The leadership of safeguarding is strong. The local authority safeguarding board recognises the school's good practice. This includes its timely reporting of safeguarding concerns, its commitment to working together and its effective information sharing.
- The school's procedures for safeguarding are rigorous. The single central record is compliant. The procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are understood and used well.
- Records relating to child protection are meticulous.
- Leaders work extremely well with external providers to support pupils who are at risk or subject to a multi-agency plan. Leaders are tenacious in following up referrals made to children's social services.
- Members of staff are well trained in many aspects of safeguarding, including those related to children missing from education and the risks associated with child sexual exploitation. There is a rigorous induction for new staff.
- Staff are regularly updated about the school's systems and aspects of safeguarding they need to be aware of. Records relating to training for staff and governors are thorough and highly organised.
- Through the curriculum, assemblies and workshops, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This includes relationships, sex education and issues in the local area that may put them at risk. For example, the police came into school recently to speak to pupils about the risks associated with child sexual exploitation.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They plan their lessons well to sustain pupils' interests. For instance, in a key stage 1 lesson, pupils were highly motivated to find out how exercise affected their heart rate and were fully engaged in their learning.
- When teaching is most effective, questioning is used to probe pupils' responses and challenge their thinking. In a secondary mathematics lesson for example, the teacher's skilful questioning resulted in pupils being able to apply their knowledge of probability to a real-life experience. However, the effective use of questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding is not consistently seen across all subjects. This hinders pupils' progress.
- Additional support provided by adults in the classroom effectively helps pupils' learning and builds their confidence and self-esteem. Praise is used widely, giving pupils the confidence to 'have a go'.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. In key stage 2 particularly, the teacher and assistants work well as a team. For example, the teaching assistant successfully took over the leading of a mathematics lesson while the teacher provided additional support for a pupil. The transition was seamless and, as a result, no learning time was lost.
- In key stage 3, the vocational curriculum is promoting cross-curricular links well and effectively preparing pupils for the key stage 4 curriculum. A lesson seen on the 9/11 terrorist attacks, for instance, was developing pupils' oracy and literacy skills well through discussion and extended writing. Tracking sheets in books also showed how the topic was developing the core skills needed for GCSE courses, for example the development of speaking and listening skills for English language and the use of different sources to find out information, which will support pupils' learning in history.
- The purposeful relationships between adults and pupils contribute successfully to the learning culture. Adults know the pupils well and use behaviour management strategies productively to support pupils and re-engage them when they go off-task.
- Work in books shows that pupils are making good progress. However, there is limited evidence of pupils being given the opportunity to write at length. This limits, for example, their creativity in writing and, in the primary phase particularly, the opportunity to practise their handwriting.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is proud of its inclusive ethos, where the child and young person are at the heart of everything it does. Most children and young people come to the school disengaged from education and staff work hard to support them and improve their low self-esteem.
- Pupils' physical well-being is well supported. Pupils in the primary phase, for example, are encouraged to be active at snack time by playing football or jogging around the outdoor space. Secondary pupils have access to a small gymnasium and table tennis at

lunchtimes and they value these opportunities.

- Promoting and supporting pupils' emotional well-being are a high priority. Activities offered to pupils include art therapy, sport, outdoor education, one-to-one interventions, sessions with the counsellor and access to external agencies, including an educational psychologist and mental health services. Pupils make good use of these activities and services.
- Leaders carefully monitor and support the welfare of pupils attending alternative provision. While there, pupils are well cared for and are safe.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Given pupils' specific needs and starting points, their conduct and self-discipline are developing well.
- Fixed-term exclusions and repeat exclusions have significantly reduced this term. When incidents of poor behaviour do occur, staff feel that leaders support them well to manage them effectively.
- Training for staff on de-escalation and restorative practice is helping them to support pupils in using strategies for self-regulating their behaviour more effectively. As a result, the numbers of incidents of poor behaviour have significantly reduced over time.
- Although attendance is low, it shows improvement over time. Case studies for pupils in school and at alternative provision show that pupils make significant improvement in their rates of attendance from very low starting points. Leaders have robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance of the pupils who attend alternative provision, as well as those having home tuition and those in school.
- Punctuality for all pupils is improving over time. Although persistent absence also shows improvement over time, it remains too high.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils who had previously been lost to education have been successfully re-engaged in learning. Most pupils make good progress in a range of subjects. Different groups of pupils make similar progress from their starting points and the length of time pupils are in the school has a positive impact on the progress they make.
- In 2018, all pupils achieved some form of accredited qualification, including GCSEs, by the end of Year 11. Most of them achieved GCSEs in both English and mathematics.
- Leaders realise the importance of pupils achieving an accreditation in English and mathematics to prepare them for the next stage in their learning. Consequently, they have added functional skills English and mathematics into the curriculum. As a result, all pupils this year are expected to gain an accreditation in these core subjects.
- Progress in vocational subjects is consistently good. Attainment and progress in art are particularly good.
- The reliability and validity of assessment information are supported by external

moderation with local mainstream schools.

- The teaching of phonics is effective. Most pupils make good progress. Pupils read confidently, fluently and with good comprehension.
- Pupils receive good impartial careers advice and guidance. A planned careers programme, including visits from employers, opportunities for long-term work placements, work experience and trips to local colleges and careers fairs, prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.
- In 2018, the majority of pupils moved on to sustained post-16 provision. Most pupils in Year 11 this year have already secured appropriate provision for September.
- Supported by the school's outreach workers, an increasing proportion of pupils are re-integrating back into mainstream education or moving on to specialist provision, appropriate to their needs.

## School details

Unique reference number	132131
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10091031

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Christopher Gaffiney
Headteacher	Andrew Burton
Telephone number	01543 255 872
Website	<a href="http://www.bridge.staffs.sch.uk">www.bridge.staffs.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@bridge.staffs.sch.uk">office@bridge.staffs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2018

## Information about this school

- The school is an all-through five to 16 pupil referral unit which serves the district of Lichfield and Burntwood in Staffordshire.
- The school has provided for pupils permanently excluded from primary schools in Staffordshire since September 2017. The aim is to return primary pupils to mainstream school within 16 weeks, if appropriate.
- Secondary pupils are referred in a variety of ways, either as a result of permanent exclusion or when they have been identified as being at risk of permanent exclusion. The school also offers provision for a small number of pupils who may need short-term home tuition, either due to medical conditions or psychological problems.
- All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have an education, health and care plan when they arrive and others may undergo an assessment for one while they are at the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.



- Most of the pupils at the school are boys.
- Seven pupils attend alternative provision on a full-time or part-time basis. The alternative providers include Next Steps, Eagles Nest, Nova Training and Alpha Training.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, representatives from the local authority and members of the management board.
- An inspector visited an alternative provider and the lead inspector spoke to another one on the telephone.
- Inspectors observed learning in lessons. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.
- Various documents were evaluated, including the school's action plan and self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the management board, safeguarding information and policies. Information about attendance, behaviour and safety was also analysed. Inspectors checked the school's website and the single central record, which contains information on safeguarding checks made on staff.
- Inspectors considered the 13 responses from staff to Ofsted's survey. There were insufficient responses from parents to Parent View to generate a report. There was one free-text response. Pupils did not respond to Ofsted's survey.

## Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda McGill

Ofsted Inspector

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