

Inspection of an outstanding school: New Bridge School

Roman Road, Hollinwood, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 3PH

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Outcome

New Bridge School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders of this school foster a 'can do' attitude in pupils and staff. Pupils are confident that they will succeed in life. Teachers are ambitious for pupils. The success stories of past pupils show that special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need not be a barrier to pupils achieving their goals in life.

Pupils love coming to school. They feel valued and say that staff listen to them and understand them. They told us that staff 'respect us for who we are'. Pupils talked about how much they enjoy their learning. They told us that they have lots of friends in school. Pupils' behaviour around school is excellent. They have a very positive attitude to their learning. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and there is very little bullying because staff will sort out any problems quickly.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They told us that their children are extremely well cared for. Parents also appreciate the wide range of activities in which their children can take part. This includes the summer school, after-school clubs, residential trips and drama productions. Parents also told us that all pupils are treated equally and can take part in all the activities on offer.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff share a strong ambition to ensure that pupils receive an excellent education. The school's aim of 'learning together, learning for all, learning for life' is certainly achieved. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel valued by leaders. Staff say that leaders are considerate of their workload.

The school curriculum is extremely ambitious and exciting. It exceeds the minimum requirements of the national curriculum. The curriculum strongly promotes the development of life skills for all pupils. There is a well-designed curriculum from Year 7 through to the end of sixth form, and beyond. This ensures that pupils can make an exceptional start in their next stage of education, employment or learning.

Teachers plan and adapt the curriculum carefully so that the needs of every pupil are met. Pupils achieve exceptionally well from their individual starting points right across the curriculum. Teachers make excellent use of technology to support learning. Across all subjects, pupils use technology with confidence. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils use tablets to film their circuit training and improve their skills. In English, voice-activated apps help pupils to improve their knowledge of vocabulary. In mathematics, pupils take photographs of their work so that they can look back, revisit and remember their working out.

The key stage 4 curriculum builds on pupils' previous knowledge and allows pupils to study subjects in more depth. For example, pupils studying drama and music produce and perform a school Christmas production. They are very proud of their achievements. They explained to us how they had helped to plan the performance, had chosen the music and how they had developed the characters in the play.

Students in the sixth form benefit from an exceptionally well-planned curriculum. This includes the opportunity to undertake supported work experience or internships. The school uses a variety of placements in the local area. In the school's own café, students showed us how they could apply their knowledge in mathematics to add up the cost of items on the menu. Following their internships, some students have gained paid employment. Leaders work with parents of those students with more complex needs to plan the curriculum together. This careful planning ensures that pupils' needs are met and that they continue to thrive when they move to residential or day-care provision.

The school's work to support pupils' personal and social development is excellent. The curriculum is awash with opportunities in which pupils can take part. These opportunities include arts, sports, cultural and personal development activities. For example, Year 8 pupils are very excited about their upcoming residential trip. Pupils' participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme promotes their independence, problem-solving skills and resilience extremely well. Links with a local football club have opened up a wide variety of other opportunities for pupils, including wheelchair football. Expert coaches also support sports clubs at lunchtime and after school.

Staff know each pupil very well. They know how to support pupils' sensory, emotional and physical needs so that pupils remain settled and can learn. Staff consider carefully each pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan to set achievable targets for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Staff are highly vigilant and trained well. They notice any behaviours or signs that something may be wrong and take appropriate action to keep pupils safe. The safeguarding team makes excellent use of a school counsellor to provide high-quality support for pupils with mental health concerns.

Leaders ensure that the school's internet connection is appropriately monitored and filtered. They also provide thorough training for pupils to help them to understand how to

stay safe online. Parents told us that they appreciate this training. They say that it has helped their children to be more alert online and more willing to share concerns.

Background

When we have judged a special school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged New Bridge School to be outstanding on 10–11 February 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	138697
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10082111
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	134
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Williams
Headteacher	Gavin Lyons
Website	www.newbridgeschool.net
Date of previous inspection	10–11 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with a wide range of SEND, from moderate learning difficulties to profound and multiple learning difficulties, including severe and complex learning difficulties. The school also caters for pupils with physical disabilities, multi-sensory impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments and specific conditions including autism spectrum condition.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school runs two separate provisions for post-16 students. These are known as the Learning Centre and Medtia Square. The school also runs a café, 'The Atrium', based within housing association offices in the centre of Oldham.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we held discussions with the head of school and other senior leaders, including those responsible for post-16 education. We held discussions with teachers, members of the governing body and the trustees of the multi-academy trust, including the chair of trustees. We also met with two groups of parents.
- We looked in detail at English, mathematics, PE and computing. We held discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons and spoke with pupils about their learning. We looked at pupils' work in these subjects. We also considered pupils' achievements in external examinations and pupils' destinations when they left school.
- We spoke with staff, pupils, parents, governors and trustees about how the school helps to keep pupils safe. We scrutinised a range of documents relating to safeguarding pupils.
- We also spoke with pupils, parents and staff about the wider curriculum including the school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kathleen McArthur

Ofsted Inspector

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