

Inspection of Bridgeway School

Church Road, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire PR5 6EP

Inspection dates: 29 June to 1 July 2021

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Bridgeway School is a calm and purposeful place of which pupils are immensely proud. Staff help pupils to learn well and thrive despite the significant challenges pupils face. Pupils' personal development is exceptionally well nurtured by caring and dedicated staff who encourage pupils to 'reach for the stars' and fulfil their ambitions.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They told inspectors about the excellent relationships they have with staff. Pupils appreciate the first-rate help they receive to improve their social skills and self-confidence. Consequently, pupils behave very well. Staff help them to quickly sort out any minor disputes that do occur. Pupils could not recall any incidents of bullying. They confidently told inspectors that bullying is not tolerated by adults or pupils.

Teachers make learning interesting and challenging. While pupils often live up to teachers' high expectations, help is always on hand to guide and reassure pupils if they get stuck or find the going tough. As a result, pupils frequently achieve well and are ready to access the next stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy the vast selection of experiences that help them to develop their self-esteem and resilience. These include mountain biking, café visits and outdoor education trips.

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

Bridgeway School provides a highly nurturing environment where there is exceptional care and guidance. This helps pupils to conquer their challenges and difficulties. They re-engage in education to become eager learners. Pupils are hardly ever absent. The school's well-established routines and the consistent application of rules by staff strongly promote pupils' positive behaviour. Pupils' conduct is exemplary.

Pupils' personal development lies at the heart of this school. Leaders make exceptional use of the excellent facilities in the school grounds as they develop pupils' social skills. Adventurous experiences, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award, are frequent. An extensive range of activities help pupils to develop their resilience and become more confident. The wide range of visits, including those to different places of worship and community events, help pupils to learn about the diversity found in British society. The sensitively planned relationships education ensures that pupils develop a strong understanding about equality and respect. High-quality impartial advice and guidance about careers help pupils to see beyond their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils make well-informed choices and are ambitious about their futures.

The curriculum at Bridgeway School covers much more than just the academic aspects of the curriculum required in the independent school standards (standards).

The curriculum also integrates high-quality therapeutic help for pupils from dedicated professionals. The school's curriculum reflects the high ambitions leaders have for pupils. That said, some curriculum plans do not clearly set out the knowledge that pupils will learn and when they will do this. This is particularly the case in subjects recently added to the curriculum. As a result, pupils may not get the chance to achieve as highly as they possibly could.

Teachers share leaders' ambitions for pupils. They have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teachers regularly return to things that pupils have learned before. This enables teachers to check what pupils know and can remember. Teachers and therapists use this information well to ensure that teaching and therapy activities meet pupils' needs.

Ensuring that pupils are fluent and confident readers is a school priority. Pupils regularly read in form time. Staff frequently read books with their classes to widen pupils' experiences of literature. These books are carefully chosen to promote pupils' understanding of social topics, such as racism or equality. Pupils who find reading difficult get the help they need to catch up and become confident readers. Pupils in key stage 4 can study for a GCSE in English Literature. As part of this, pupils use their reading skills confidently to study complex texts such as Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar'.

Pupils achieve well in the school. They typically leave with a range of national qualifications such as GCSEs. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

The proprietor company ensures that the school meets all of the required standards and the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's safeguarding policy is published on the proprietor company website. Directors know the school well and are aware of the impact that the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has had on pupils and staff. Directors are proud of their staff and strongly promote staff well-being. As a result, staff morale is extremely high. Directors hold leaders closely to account for the impact of their actions. Leaders have well-established systems in place to check on the effectiveness of the school. That said, some checks focus more on the actions of teaching staff than the impact of teaching on pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant. They place a very high priority on the safeguarding of pupils. Staff receive comprehensive and up-to-date training in safeguarding. This ensures that they have secure knowledge of the possible risks of harm that pupils may face. Staff know of the particular risks that pupils may face due to their individual needs. Leaders ensure information to help keep pupils safe is documented meticulously and shared appropriately with other agencies, parents and carers.

The proprietor company completes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's curriculum plans do not consistently and clearly set out the knowledge that pupils are expected to acquire. This is particularly the case in some subjects that are recent additions to the curriculum. As a result, pupils sometimes find learning more difficult. This is because teaching does not break more complex ideas down into the steps of knowledge required to develop pupils' understanding. Leaders should ensure that the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is carefully organised in all subject curriculums.
- Some leaders do not understand the most effective ways to monitor the quality of education. As a result, leaders' monitoring of learning is sometimes overly focused on checking the actions of teachers. Consequently, leaders may not have the information they need to determine how the curriculum could be further improved. The proprietor company should ensure that all leaders have the knowledge and skills that they need to evaluate the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning.

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

School details

Unique reference number	147206
DfE registration number	888/6118
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10193249
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Witherslack Group Ltd.
Chair	Judith Jones
Headteacher	Susan Gill
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,677 to £87,621
Telephone number	01772 284435
Website	witherslackgroup.co.uk/bridgeway-school/
Email address	donna.rothwell@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened on 23 July 2019.
- The school currently does not operate a sixth form.
- The school uses two alternative providers, CAST and Preston North End Football Club.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and school life. Inspectors spoke with two directors of the proprietor company and two officers of the proprietor company. They also spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation related to the work of the school and the standards. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors held a telephone conversation with a representative of a local authority which places pupils at the school.
- Inspectors considered the 26 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including three free-text comments. They also spoke to a small number of parents in person or by phone. Inspectors considered the 40 responses to Ofsted's inspection survey for staff and the 12 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- During the inspection, inspectors conducted deep dives in reading and English, mathematics, physical education and personal, social, health and economic education. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read in lessons.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Cropper

Her Majesty's Inspector

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