

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Newcastle Bridges School

Drayton Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 3RU

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2022

## **Outcome**

Newcastle Bridges School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils flourish at Newcastle Bridges. They respond readily to high expectations. Parents and carers typically say that the school is 'tremendously supportive, helpful, patient and ambitious'. They say that this is a school where all pupils are 'treated with respect'.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. Inspectors observed pupils moving around the school calmly. Interaction between pupils was observed to be both supportive and polite. Pupils are aware of the needs of their peers; they support each other very well.

Pupils feel safe. Bullying is extremely rare. When it does occur, pupils are confident that adults will deal with it quickly.

Pupils attend a number of sites. These are located at the Drayton Road site and at a number of medical facilities across the area. Pupils and students have a wide range of additional needs, which are managed on site by medical professionals. Members of the education team are highly skilled at adapting to particular needs alongside each young person's medical pathway.

Most pupils are dual registered with a variety of local secondary schools. Pupils at the Drayton Road site are well supported in their learning through the Bridges School curriculum. Some pupils who are supported at other sites are provided with learning materials by their 'home' school. Staff working with them also use the Bridges curriculum when needed.

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

The school has pupils based across a number of settings, many of whom are taught within hospitals and health-led environments. The health needs of the pupils are such that there is often a multi-professional team working with each individual and their educational pathway needs to fit around their health needs. Leaders are highly effective in ensuring that this is the case.

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum makes it clear exactly what individual pupils must know, and be able to do, in all subjects. Leaders have thought carefully about the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which this should be taught. Leaders check that the school's curriculum is being implemented effectively. Teachers check pupils' understanding before moving on to new content. Pupils achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum. By way of example, in science lessons, pupils show confidence both when tackling new concepts and when revisiting what they have previously been taught. Pupils in Year 8 were seen using their knowledge of cells to compare the similarities and differences between different cell structures.

Leaders help pupils prepare for their life after school. Pupils are very well supported in their transition out of school. Each individual's next steps are well managed. These are very carefully considered by adults working within multi-agency groups. This includes students in the sixth form. For those within a hospital environment, staff work with medical practitioners to help pupils to understand the options open to them and the routes they can take towards a more independent future.

The pastoral team within the school is very active in supporting pupils' well-being. The 'hub' is often visited by pupils who may need time away from classrooms to talk or calm. This helps them to be more ready for learning. Pupils explained how much they value this place of safety and calm, where they feel they can explore their feelings and needs with supportive staff.

Staff are very aware that for many pupils, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that they missed vital face-to-face teaching. Pupils who need additional intervention are expertly supported to ensure that they catch up quickly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with medical needs receive strong support to access the full curriculum. Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well, whatever their circumstances.

Leaders and staff promote pupils' personal development effectively. Pupils said that they particularly enjoy their broad programme of enrichment activities, which include horse riding, skiing, cookery and visits to a local farm.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive for their workload and well-being. Governors and trustees provide effective challenge and support to school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have undertaken extensive training to ensure that they can identify and respond to any concerns that a pupil may be at risk. Staff are vigilant and report concerns promptly. Leaders work with a very wide range of external agencies to provide support for

pupils and their families. Governors make regular visits to review the school's safeguarding procedures. The school makes robust checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with pupils.

## Background

When we have judged a 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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be outstanding in October 2016.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 school and 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 145361   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Newcastle upon Tyne  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10227627   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Alternative provision  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Academy alternative provision converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 2 to 19  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 108  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 8  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                             | Joanne Clifford-Swan   |
| <b>Executive Headteacher</b>                      | Chris Richardson   |
| <b>Head of School</b>                             | Kevin Stafford   |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.bridges.newcastle.sch.uk">www.bridges.newcastle.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Prosper Learning Trust.
- The school has bases at the main Kenton school site, Great North Children’s Hospital, Freeman Hospital, The Alwood Clinic, The Complex Neurodevelopmental Disorder Service at Walkergate Park and The Ferndene Centre.
- The school uses one registered alternative education provider based at a nearby school.

## Information about this inspection

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

- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders. The inspectors also met with the chair of the Trust and chair of the local advisory committee (LAC) and members of the LAC committee.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors visited the sites at The Ferndene Centre, Great North Children's Hospital and The Alwood Clinic.
- The inspectors held a telephone conversation with a member of staff from The Complex Neurodevelopmental Disorder Service at Walkergate Park.
- The inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the actions they take to keep pupils safe. The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record, which includes recruitment checks made on staff. The inspectors looked at information about the school's actions to protect the most vulnerable pupils.
- The views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey were considered. The responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were also taken into account. A number of pupils responded to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Catherine Beard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gill Booth

Ofsted Inspector

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