

# Inspection of a good school: Bridgelea Pupil Referral Unit

Bridgelea Road, Withington, Manchester, Lancashire M20 3FB

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Inspection dates:

5 to 6 December 2023

## **Outcome**

Bridgelea Pupil Referral Unit continues to be a good school.

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

Staff greet pupils with a warm smile each morning. This helps pupils to have a positive start to their day. Typically, pupils feel happy and safe at Bridgelea. They described a firm sense of belonging to this school community. In part, this is because of the strong and trusting relationships that staff forge with pupils.

Pupils have often experienced disruption to their education in the past. To address this, the school makes sure that staff understand pupils' additional and individual learning needs. Armed with this information, staff strive to reignite pupils' interest in learning. Typically, staff are successful in re-engaging most pupils.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn well. Pupils benefit from skilled and knowledgeable staff.

Pupils experience a broad range of enrichment activities. They enjoy the many extra-curricular opportunities that staff provide, including trips and visits. For example, pupils get the chance to develop life skills through visiting local shops and places of interest. These experiences help to develop pupils' confidence, their social skills and their self-esteem.

The school has equally high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Typically, pupils learn in a calm and purposeful learning environment.

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

Many pupils have missed significant periods of learning before arriving at Bridgelea. This means that some pupils have considerable gaps in their knowledge of different national curriculum subjects. To remedy this, the school uses well-designed assessment systems to establish pupils' starting points. The school also identifies any additional learning needs

which pupils may have, including SEND, quickly and accurately. These assessments are used to inform the curriculum that pupils receive.

Drawing on the information from teachers' assessments of pupils' starting points, the school has designed out a broad and balanced curriculum to reflect pupils' individual needs. In the main, the curriculum is suitably ambitious and, typically, it helps pupils to catch up and to achieve well.

In many subjects, the school has identified the important knowledge that pupils will learn. This carefully selected subject content helps pupils to close any gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Within these subjects, teachers design suitable activities that support pupils' learning.

In a few remaining subjects, leaders are in the process of finalising the essential knowledge that pupils will learn. In these subjects, teachers are not as clear as they could be about how best to design learning activities. From time to time, this hinders how deeply a few pupils learn new subject content in these curriculum areas.

The school ensures that checks are made on how well staff deliver the curriculum. There are some subjects where these checks are more successful. In these subjects, the school has a clearer oversight of how well pupils are learning the curriculum. However, in subjects where the curriculum has not been finalised, the school cannot evaluate the quality of the implementation of the curriculum as effectively as it should.

The school places a great emphasis on ensuring that pupils can read fluently and confidently. Staff promote the enjoyment of reading by providing opportunities for pupils to read high-quality texts. Many pupils are at the earliest stages of reading. An effective phonics programme is in place. Staff receive appropriate training, which enables them to deliver the phonics scheme consistently well. The school identifies and addresses the gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge accurately.

Staff are tenacious in ensuring that pupils attend school as often as they should. They use a raft of strategies to support pupils to improve their attendance. As a result, pupils who were often absent from school now attend more regularly.

Staff help pupils to regulate their behaviour and to understand their feelings and emotions. Overall, pupils behave well. Pupils who need extra support respond well to staff.

The school puts pupils' wider development at the core of what it does. Pupils learn about how to form safe and effective relationships with different people. They show respect for different members of their community because they learn about a variety of faiths, religions and beliefs. Pupils also learn how to manage risks in their immediate community and how to keep safe. For example, they benefit from sessions delivered by local police officers which help pupils to understand how to make better choices.

Members of the school's management committee are aspirational for the school's pupils. Those responsible for governance hold the school to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff feel valued by the school. They appreciate the strategies that the school puts in place to support their workload. These include discussions about how best to implement school policies.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a minority of subjects, the curriculum has not been finalised. This hinders how deeply some pupils learn new information. Furthermore, it hampers how well leaders evaluate the implementation of the curriculum. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking in these remaining subjects. It should strengthen how well it quality assures the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum in these areas.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2014.

## **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.

## **Further information**

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133945
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290140
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	106
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mike Cooke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kelly Eyre
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bridgelea.manchester.sch.uk">www.bridgelea.manchester.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	18 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been several new members of staff since the previous inspection.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- There are currently no pupils on roll who are in the early years.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading; mathematics; and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked with pupils and staff and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised leaders' curriculum documentation and pupils' work in some other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and during their snack time. They scrutinised leaders' records of behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation document.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

## **Inspection team**

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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