

# Brownhill School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105861
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rochdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	298533
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Emerson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	41
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Tracey Richards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kate Connolly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	Heights Lane Rochdale Lancashire OL12 0PZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 648990
<b>Fax number</b>	01706 648537

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school serves the whole of the Rochdale Authority and is for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In June 2006, the school was given a Notice to Improve because it required significant improvement. The school was monitored, subsequently, by an Ofsted inspector in January 2007 and was judged to be making satisfactory progress. For a period of time since the last inspection, the school was led by a consultant headteacher, and more recently by a headteacher who is head of the local authority's pupil referral service. The local authority is in the process of amalgamating the school with the pupil referral service to form the Brownhill/Pupil Referral Service Federation. Although the school is for boys and girls, only three girls are on roll currently. Most pupils are of secondary age. A much higher than average number of pupils has free school meals. All pupils come from White British backgrounds. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Some pupils have additional needs such as moderate learning difficulties. Many pupils have had a disrupted education because of a history of poor attendance and exclusions from their previous schools. Attainment on entry is well below average. Since September 2007, the only two primary aged pupils on roll have been taught at the primary pupil referral unit.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and offers satisfactory value for money. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Since the previous inspection, the local authority initiative to link the school and the pupil referral service to create a federation has begun to promote school improvement. Strong leadership is building on this initiative and is driving the school forward. Governors are playing their full part. Staff morale has improved and staff are working together as an effective team. The quality of teaching has improved. All teaching is at least satisfactory with examples of good practice. Staff have good relationships with the pupils and are skilled at improving their challenging behaviour. Pupils enjoy the variety of subjects and activities they are offered in a good curriculum, particularly practical subjects such as art and design, and food technology. This is reflected in their good achievement in these areas. Provision for English has improved. Pupils now make satisfactory progress in developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles. The school is a safe environment. Targets for improving behaviour are well understood by the pupils and are effective in helping them to improve their behaviour and social skills. The reorganisation of the classes to set up specialist groups such as the 'I Can' group and the 'Forward' group means that the particular needs of different groups of pupils are better met. However, pupils are not as clear as they could be about their academic targets and what they need to do to make their work better. Teachers do not always ensure that work set is at the right level for individual pupils. The school is working closely with the education welfare service and has put in place a variety of strategies to improve attendance. Consequently, the attendance of the majority of pupils has improved. However, systems for recording attendance are not always precise enough and there is still a minority of pupils with poor attendance. Pupils state that there is always someone they can turn to if they have a problem. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their school and local community through participating in activities such as the gardening club. However, the school council is not active enough in school life and there are only limited systems to canvas the pupils' views. This means that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to contribute to school development. Good links with a variety of agencies and local colleges support pupils well in their preparation for adult life.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all work set is at the right level for individual pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils know how well they are doing in the different subjects of the curriculum and understand what they need to do to make their work better.
- Enhance systems to record and promote good attendance.
- Introduce more opportunities for pupils to contribute to the development of the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Many pupils enter the school with weak academic skills because their education has been disrupted as a result of poor behaviour. They respond to the effective systems to manage their behaviour and as a result, make satisfactory progress overall. They achieve well in practical subjects such as art and design, physical education and design and technology. Initiatives such as producing a school magazine have motivated pupils to try and improve their literacy skills. The recent appointment of a subject specialist to coordinate the teaching of English has ensured that achievement in English is now satisfactory. The quality of targets in individual education plans is variable, although those set in the 'I Can' class for more vulnerable pupils are detailed and sharp, and support these pupils making good progress. There has been a considerable improvement in the range of accredited courses offered to pupils since the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils are now able to gain up to five GCSEs as well as Entry level qualifications and vocational awards. In 2007, most Year 11 pupils leaving the school gained at least Entry Level passes or vocational qualifications in areas such as vehicle maintenance, with three pupils gaining four GCSEs at grades C-G.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils respond well to the effective systems to promote good behaviour and to the good strategies to support their emotional health and well-being. Consequently, their behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory and the number of exclusions and recorded incidents of misbehaviour is reducing. The successful reintegration of a number of pupils from the 'Forward' class into mainstream schools is a clear measure of the school's success in improving pupils' behaviour. Any incidents of challenging behaviour that do occur are well managed so that lessons and other activities are not disrupted. There are strong relationships between staff and pupils and the pupils feel there are staff they can turn to if they have problems. However, pupils do not feel they have enough opportunities to share their views about issues such as ensuring that school meals include healthy options. Attendance has improved since the last inspection. For the majority of pupils it is satisfactory whilst for a small number, attendance is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with examples of good teaching evident. Staff are skilled at working with pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They constantly praise pupils for appropriate behaviour and good effort and manage challenging behaviour confidently. Practical resources and a variety of well planned activities motivate the pupils to learn and to concentrate on their work. Since the previous inspection, the day-to-day use of learning targets has improved. Most teachers set targets for learning in lessons, although they are not as clear as they might be to the pupils. Pupils do not know sufficiently how well they are doing in different subjects and what they need to do to improve their work further. Assessment has improved and there are now better systems in place to track pupils' progress; they are effective in mathematics. However, the information gained from assessment in most

subjects is still not used as well as it could be to ensure that all work set is matched accurately to the levels at which different pupils are working.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has improved considerably since the previous inspection and now meets the needs of pupils well. The 'I Can' class provides an effective nurture group for the most vulnerable pupils, whilst pupils in the 'Forward' group are prepared well for reintegration to mainstream schools. Since September 2007, the very small number of primary aged pupils taught at the primary pupil referral unit has accessed a more suitable primary curriculum and environment. An effective therapeutic programme promotes pupils' emotional health and well-being. Pupils enjoy the good opportunities to engage in sport and practical activities such as art and design. Pupils are encouraged to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle by, for example, making a DVD to promote anti-bullying. The curriculum is enriched through good links with a variety of organisations and individuals in the community. For example, pupils have written thoughtful poems with the support of a professional poet. Pupils are prepared well socially for adult life. There is a good focus on developing necessary practical skills such as cooking, good opportunities for work experience and strong links with local colleges. The range of accreditation offered to pupils has improved well so that all pupils can gain suitable awards.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. All procedures to safeguard pupils are in place. The majority of parents and carers feel that their children are safe and well cared for. For example, parents describe the staff as 'caring and very patient'. All pupils have detailed targets for improving their behaviour which they respond to positively. However, pupils are not sufficiently clear about their individual learning targets or about what they need to do to make their work better. There has been a good improvement in systems to promote pupils' attendance, although records of absences do not show in sufficient detail the reasons why a minority of pupils still have poor attendance and what can be done to improve it.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The newly established leadership team, governors and the local authority are working together to improve effectiveness. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and recognise those areas where improvement is necessary. They are beginning to build on the strong foundation for change established by the consultant headteacher. For example, monitoring of all aspects of the school's work continues to improve. The new headteacher is experienced and able, and staff at the school are already benefiting from working and training with colleagues from the pupil referral service. Staff morale has improved and staff are enthusiastic about developing the school further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Brownhill School, Heights Lane, Rochdale, Lancashire,  
OL12 0PZ

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. It was very useful to know what you think about your school.

These are some things that are good about your school:

- The interesting variety of subjects which you study.
- The support that is given to you when you feel angry or upset.
- The point systems and behaviour targets which help you to improve your behaviour.
- All of this is possible because your headteacher and all the staff are doing a lot to improve the school and to make it as good as they can for you.

I have asked your teachers to improve these things to make your school better:

- To make sure that work set is at just the right level for each of you.
- To make sure that you all know how well you are doing in different subjects and how you can make your work better.
- To help those of you who take more time off school than you should to improve your attendance. It is important that you attend every day to improve your chances when you leave school.
- To give you more opportunities to plan with the staff how to improve the school further.

I hope you carry on enjoying what you are doing and continue to help your teachers all you can.