

Inspection of Bridge House School

1 Stuart Road, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SR

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Bridge House School. They feel happy and safe at this welcoming and friendly school. Many pupils found it difficult to attend school regularly in their previous settings. Pupils said that they are much happier in this school and as a result their attendance has improved. Pupils trust the adults that are working with them and said that staff know them well. Pupils are comfortable talking to adults in school about any worries that they might have. They know that staff will listen to them and quickly help to resolve any concerns.

The school has a calm atmosphere, and in the main, pupils behave well. Pupils appreciate the range of opportunities available, including trips and visits. For example, pupils enjoy planning, preparing and hosting events, such as the recent school festival. These experiences, along with other activities in school, including playing games and working on construction tasks together, help pupils to build their confidence and social skills.

The school is ambitious for pupils to achieve well. It has a strong focus on pupils' well-being and ensuring that they feel settled in school. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to study towards accredited qualifications. This limits pupils' choices for their next steps in education, employment or training.

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

There have been significant changes in the leadership at Bridge House School since it opened in November 2022. This turbulence has hindered the school's progress over the past year. The headteacher and executive headteacher are very new to their roles. These new leaders have focused on improving pupils' behaviour. They have prioritised ensuring that pupils feel comfortable and safe in the school environment.

The curriculum is in the early stages of development. In some subjects, the school has not identified the specific knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which this should be taught. In these subjects, pupils do not develop a sufficiently detailed knowledge or understanding of subject content over time. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has a system in place to assess pupils' knowledge and to identify any gaps in their learning. However, this assessment system is not used consistently well across all subject areas. In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment information to design learning that builds on what pupils know and can do. In some lessons, teachers do not devise activities that are appropriately adapted to the needs of each individual pupil.

The school has begun to encourage pupils to develop a love of reading. It has created a welcoming library space that gives pupils access to a range of books. However, the school does not identify those pupils who find reading difficult. Those

pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read do not get the support that they need to catch up with their peers. This hinders how well they can achieve across the curriculum.

All pupils at this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school works well with parents and carers to identify the additional needs of each individual pupil. Leaders have begun to put in place support for pupils to meet these needs. For example, staff have helped some pupils to develop strategies to better cope with unplanned changes in the school day.

In the main, pupils behave well. Nevertheless, staff struggle to support some pupils effectively. These pupils miss out on valuable learning time as they do not have the skills to identify and manage their emotions well.

The school's programme of personal development is limited. The school's careers programme is ad hoc. Not all pupils have had access to independent careers information. Some pupils have visited local colleges to help them decide their next steps. However, there is no systematic approach in order to ensure that all pupils gain appropriate experiences to help them make informed choices about future career pathways. Moreover, pupils do not learn what they need to about relationships and sex education at an age-appropriate level.

The proprietor body has not ensured that the independent school standards ('the standards') are consistently and securely met. It has failed to ensure that all the standards for the quality of education and welfare, health and safety of pupils are met. The proprietor body has recently put in place more effective systems to ensure that the strategic and day-to-day aspects of the operation of the school are effectively monitored.

The proprietor body has not ensured that the attendance register is kept in line with Education Regulations 2006. This means that leaders do not have an accurate understanding of how well pupils attend the school.

The proprietor body is mindful of the impact of the changes that they have made on staff workload and well-being. It has made adjustments to the expectations that it has of staff to ensure that their workload is manageable.

The school's policies, including an up-to-date safeguarding policy that takes account of statutory guidance, are made available to parents on the school's website and also on request.

The school has ensured that it meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school has not finalised its curriculum thinking. This means that teachers do not know what pupils should learn and by when in some subjects. Added to this, pupils have no opportunity to work towards recognised qualifications. Leaders should ensure that they finalise the curriculum and determine what qualifications will be available for pupils.
- The school has not ensured that staff have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver the curriculum and manage pupils' behaviour consistently well. This means that staff do not always choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils learn well or select suitable strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. The school should ensure that staff have the training and support that they need.
- The school does not have suitable systems in place to identify and support pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. This means that some pupils do not get the support that they need to learn to read confidently and fluently. This hinders how well these pupils achieve across the curriculum. Leaders should take steps to identify and support those pupils who need help to learn to read.
- The proprietor body has not thought carefully enough about RSE and health education programme. This means that pupils do not have an age-appropriate understanding of sex education. The proprietor body should ensure that the statutory requirements for RSE and health education are met.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	149189
DfE registration number	356/6014
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10286498
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Proprietor	Your Chapter Ltd
Chair	Virginia Perkins
Headteacher	Anita Cameron
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000 – £79,570
Telephone number	0161 510 5678
Website	www.educ8.org.uk
Email address	anita.cameron@educ8.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first standard inspection that has taken place for this school. The school opened on 28 October 2022.
- The headteacher and executive headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school is located at 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SR.
- This school is part of the Educ8 group of schools, which is a subsidiary of Your Chapter Ltd.
- The school caters for pupils with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils at this school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school currently has a very small number of primary-age pupils and sixth-form students on roll.
- There are a small number of pupils who have recently joined the school who are in the process of building up their timetabled hours as part of their transition to the school.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and with other staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the proprietor body, including the chair.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including documentation relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions

about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector carried out a tour of the school's premises.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. However, inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime, in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors also spoke to some parents on the telephone.

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Charlotte Oles

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools,
 - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b),
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023