

# The Aspire Hub, Burnley

Chapel Annexe, Chapel Street, Burnley BB11 1LE

## Inspection dates

13–15 November 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders' commitment to provide pupils with the best chance to improve their behaviour results in pupils developing the skills they need to access education successfully.
- Staff morale is high. Staff share the leaders' vision to provide every pupil with the best possible opportunities at The Aspire Hub.
- Leaders' effective assessments of pupils' starting points before they join the school ensure that teachers have detailed knowledge of pupils' academic ability and interests. Teachers use this information well to provide interesting learning activities.
- Staff are effective in keeping pupils safe. Pupils agree that they are well cared for in school.
- Work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils' self-confidence develops well in this nurturing environment.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers pupils a range of opportunities that develop their academic, personal and life skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils' learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.
- Leaders ensure that systems to support good behaviour are well developed and consistently applied. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- Most pupils arrive with a history of very poor attendance. Staff work effectively, bringing about improved attendance for all pupils.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are effective. They identify clear targets for change and the impact of their actions is evident. However, leaders do not analyse the impact of behaviour strategies over time, at a whole-school level, to inform them where further focus is required.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff work well together and use assessment information to plan activities that meet most pupils' needs. However, more challenge is sometimes needed, especially for those pupils who are most eager to learn.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing more challenging work for pupils, especially those whose attitude to learning is improved.
- Ensure that leaders analyse the impact of positive behaviour strategies more closely, so that ongoing improvement can be more easily planned.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders have high expectations and lead by example. Together with an enthusiastic staff team, leaders ensure that pupils' attitudes to learning improve. This renews pupils' belief in themselves and their future. Leaders' determination that all pupils will succeed, combined with good-quality learning, ensures that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders, together with staff, parents, carers and pupils, break down barriers to learning and create an environment where pupils feel secure and are keen to re-engage in their learning.
- All of the independent school standards are met. Policies and procedures are in place and are effective in promoting the school's aims. The majority of pupils transition back into mainstream schools within 10 weeks.
- As a result of effective professional development, adults focus on developing key skills, including life skills, to meet the needs of pupils. Staff provide a range of enrichment activities linked to pupils' interests, such as bug hunts. Daily meetings enable staff to share successes and ways in which they can adapt their support and provision for pupils.
- Adults promote British values well. Pupils understand, respect and recognise that rules are there to keep them safe. Adults give pupils opportunities to vote on matters that are important to them.
- Leaders' relationships with the primary schools they work with are extremely positive. The high-quality support, advice and guidance offered to these schools make an invaluable contribution to the success of pupils' reintegration into their home school.
- Parents and the schools that place pupils at Aspire receive information through regular reports about pupils' progress. Leaders also provide an outreach service which is well received by the senior staff of local schools who spoke with the inspector.
- Parents were very supportive of the work of the Hub. Comments included, 'My child's confidence has grown since being at Aspire. He smiles now, he's happy and self-regulates his behaviour. His self-esteem has really improved.' This reflects the views of other parents with whom the inspector spoke.
- All staff follow consistently the clear behaviour strategy. Pupils respond well to the reward system. Leaders track and monitor individual incidents of low-level and challenging behaviour.
- Leaders analyse incidents of poor behaviour to see how staff could better support pupils. As a result, there has been a significant decline in the number of incidents for each pupil. However, leaders do not use this information well enough at a strategic level to help better inform improvements in behaviour over time.

## Governance

- The proprietors are knowledgeable about the school. They have a clear vision and are committed to ensuring that vulnerable pupils receive a good-quality education that enables them to access learning effectively.
- Regular reports and meetings ensure that the proprietors challenge the headteacher in relation to key performance indicators, including attendance and reintegration into mainstream schools or other appropriate provision.
- The proprietors ensure that the school buildings are fit for purpose. Classrooms are suitable for teaching. Outdoor spaces are available for pupils to use during the day. Pupils benefit from play equipment and recreation.
- Proprietors ensure that the company's website is informative for parents. The website meets requirements for the provision of information about safeguarding, including publishing the policy online, the complaints procedure and the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that the school's prospectus provides specific information about the Hub.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders ensure that all the appropriate checks are carried out on staff before they are allowed to work with the pupils. The identity of all visitors to the school is checked. The school buildings are safe.
- All staff are trained annually according to the most up-to-date guidance. Staff are vigilant and skilled in identifying possible safeguarding concerns. Staff are diligent in following school procedures if they have a concern about any pupil.
- The headteacher takes a lead in safeguarding and has put in place a clear system for referrals which enables staff to share their concerns quickly. Records show that the school has developed close working partnerships with other professionals which have successfully supported pupils and their families, to keep pupils safe and secure.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- When pupils join the school, their complex needs are assessed and individual plans are put in place for them. Room leaders, who are in charge of each classroom in the Hub, regularly check on pupils' progress and assess the impact of actions on their academic success, as well as their social, personal and behavioural development.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Positive relationships between staff and pupils underpin effective learning. Teachers and key workers know pupils well and use this knowledge to engage pupils and minimise any disruptions to learning. Staff are skilled in supporting pupils' personal development and in helping them to overcome the barriers which obstruct their learning.
- All staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in their personal, emotional and social development. This is evident in pupils' learning across the school. As a result, pupils are supported well to engage in their learning. Communication and language skills are effectively developed. For example, conversations are encouraged between pupils and staff at breakfast time, breaktimes and within lessons.
- Transition arrangements for pupils moving back into mainstream schools are thorough

and are thoughtfully carried out. Leaders are extremely mindful of the needs of individual pupils and their families. To this end, leaders are flexible and adapt reintegration arrangements as needed to make sure that pupils' return to mainstream school is successful.

- The teaching of basic reading is effective. Pupils are able to break down words because their one-to-one daily guided reading and phonics games help them to improve their reading skills.
- Pupils often start school with gaps in their mathematical understanding. Room leaders are quick to identify these weaknesses and ensure that activities build on prior knowledge. As a result, pupils make progress in their work. Pupils' learning journeys show that some have moved from basic counting to solving missing number problems.
- Classrooms are bright and welcoming places in which to learn. Staff work creatively to capture the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. Staff plan well-structured lessons. Pupils concentrate and focus on the tasks set when teachers plan carefully to meet their needs. For example, pupils in one class have moved on from writing single words to writing extended sentences.
- Staff use questioning well to measure pupils' understanding. Pupils are moved on to the next task or given extra support when appropriate. This enhances pupils' progress. However, pupils, especially those who demonstrate enhanced readiness for learning, are too infrequently set tasks with the increasing levels of challenge which would further improve their work.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders and other adults support pupils' developing confidence. Over time, because of the high levels of individual support offered, pupils' self-esteem and confidence improve. As a result, some pupils are able to hold meaningful conversations with adults about their learning.
- Leaders and all staff are excellent role models. They engage with pupils in a manner which consistently embodies the standards they expect. As a result, pupils' behaviour improves because they know what is expected of them.
- All pupils benefit from regular sessions, such as discussion times, to help them develop personally, emotionally and socially. There is an emphasis on developing pupils' self-belief, resilience and mental health. Leaders are confident that this is the key to unlocking pupils' potential to be successful when they return to mainstream schooling.
- Teachers' and other adults' deep knowledge of pupils and the strong relationships they build ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment. This allows pupils to succeed in developing stronger social and emotional skills.
- Pupils have effective opportunities to think and learn about broader themes. These link into ideas, such as the difference between right and wrong, and some important national traditions, such as Remembrance Day. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop empathy for others.

- The proprietor ensures that pupils think about other people by undertaking activities to support charities. Pupils also demonstrate an understanding of different faiths and cultures. During the inspection, they were able to discuss their recent work about Diwali.
- There are good facilities in the two class bases for pupils to learn simple cookery skills, and they are encouraged to help prepare and serve food at lunchtime. This is one of the ways in which staff help pupils to develop their skills and confidence in sharing, turn-taking and thinking about the needs of their classmates.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are taught how to keep safe in a range of situations. During the inspection, pupils explained how learning helps them to keep safe. For example, they learn how to keep safe near fireworks and when using the internet.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy through their choices of food and the importance of exercise. Pupils also help clean up after eating, including working together to wash up plates and learning about food hygiene.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All classrooms and areas within the school are calm and orderly. During the inspection, pupils entering the building in the morning did so calmly.
- Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to continually improve attendance. For all pupils, their attendance, which has often been very poor previously, improves dramatically while at the school.
- Pupils demonstrate a growing understanding and empathy for their peers. This is evident in the consideration that pupils show towards one another. For example, pupils play very well together outside, helping each other up if someone falls over.
- The curriculum, together with the staff's ability to adapt their teaching, enables pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils understand what adults do to help them stay safe from harm. They understand the way in which adults help them to make the right choices.
- Leaders ensure that systems to support good behaviour are consistently applied to enable pupils to understand how to succeed. Records of behaviour show a decrease in incidents, the longer pupils remain in the Hub.
- The school's approach to working with pupils so they better manage their own behaviour leads to significant improvements for individual pupils. Adults learn from any instances of particularly challenging behaviour. However, leaders do not analyse the trends in low-level disruption over time to inform them of strengths and weaknesses in the behaviour management strategies.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils often start in the school with knowledge and skills below those typically expected for their age. Assessment information is promptly collected by leaders to track pupils' progress and ensure that they make good progress before they return to a mainstream school.
- When attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning improve through support, pupils' self-esteem and confidence also improve. This leads to improved outcomes for pupils.

- Many pupils start at Aspire having missed significant amounts of their previous education. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. School leaders recognise that for many pupils it is important to support their personal development and welfare if they are to engage in learning. Once this has been established, pupils settle to learning and make good progress from their starting points.
- Where pupils continue to struggle with their learning, they are well supported to make small steps of progress. Staff make a valuable contribution to collecting information for any pupils who require an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils make good progress in science and they enjoy practical investigations. For example, during the inspection, pupils showed in their work the scientific knowledge they acquired when planning and evaluating an experiment on growing crystals.
- As a result of the provision for pupils' behavioural and emotional well-being, almost every pupil makes significant progress in taking responsibility for their own conduct. The majority of pupils successfully return to mainstream schools.
- Adults provide opportunities for pupils to read across the curriculum. Pupils develop a love of reading and are becoming more confident in reading to other pupils. Early phonics teaching enables pupils to sound out unfamiliar words.
- Pupils develop their writing skills effectively across a range of subjects. Work in pupils' books indicates improvement in the quality of their writing. This is also true of their development of basic skills in mathematics.
- Pupils' learning journeys indicate that pupils throughout the school make at least good progress against their individual targets in English, mathematics and behavioural and emotional development. However, as behaviour improves, there is now more scope to challenge pupils further in their English and mathematics.

## School details

Unique reference number	145194
DfE registration number	888/6074
Inspection number	10053741

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

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	0
Number of part-time pupils	13
Proprietor	Aspire Behaviour Management Ltd
Chair	Jon Batchelor
Headteacher	Gillian Bullock
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,175
Telephone number	01282 792943
Website	<a href="http://aspirehubburnley.co.uk">aspirehubburnley.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@aspirebm.co.uk">info@aspirebm.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Aspire Hub is located in a refurbished former industrial unit close to the centre of Burnley. It began operation in March 2017 when it was registered on the early years, childcare and voluntary childcare registers. Following an inspection carried out under Section 97 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the school became a registered independent school.
- The school admits pupils who have behavioural and social difficulties, many of whom have been identified as being at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream education. Pupils come from mainstream schools in Burnley and the surrounding area. Places are secured through a referral process involving different agencies, including schools and the



local authority.

- Pupils typically attend the school on a full-time basis for approximately eight weeks, Children stay on role at their mainstream school and are registered as being educated off site. After this period, pupils are typically expected to reintegrate into their 'home' school, although there is provision for them to spend a longer period at the Hub depending on pupils' needs.
- A number of other services operate out of The Aspire Hub which complement the work within the school. These services include support for the development of behaviour management strategies in mainstream schools and the provision of courses for parents.
- While the number of pupils currently attending the school is below the identified maximum number, some members of staff who would normally work within the school are involved in providing outreach services to schools.
- There are no children of early years age currently on roll.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects. The inspector toured the site and checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.
- The inspector met with pupils, both formally and informally, to listen to their views. The inspector also spoke with parents.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and teaching staff. The inspector also spoke with directors of the school.
- The inspector took into account the views of 12 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no parental responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- The inspector observed pupils in lessons and during social time. The inspector also scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked at a wide sample of their books.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information about pupils' attainment, the school's self-evaluation and action points for improvement. Records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance, behaviour and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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