

Bright Futures

Willow Tree Park, Beech House, Booths Lane, Lymm, Cheshire WA13 0GH

Inspection dates

10–12 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The proprietor and leaders constantly strive to improve on the excellent practice at the school. They ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Key to the school's success is the outstanding leadership of the proprietor, headteacher and other school leaders. They have established an ambitious culture where only the best will do.
- Pupils have complex learning and behavioural needs. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils enable pupils to grow in self-esteem, confidence and in their ability to interact with others.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and their attendance levels are high. Pupils' rates of attendance improve significantly during their time at the school.
- The provision for sixth-form and post-19 students is outstanding. Adults provide students with numerous opportunities to increase their independence in line with their individual plans. Their skills and confidence grow rapidly as they experience working alongside members of the local community.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is excellent right across the school. Staff provide an exciting range of interesting and purposeful activities for pupils. This enables pupils to enjoy their learning and make rapid progress.
- The school provides a secure setting where pupils feel safe. Arrangements for safeguarding and welfare are exemplary.
- New assessment systems are excellent. Assessments are rigorous and carefully moderated to ensure accuracy.
- Pupils' records contain a wealth of information, enabling staff to pitch tasks and experiences for pupils at just the right level.
- Teachers use excellent resources, including information and communication technology, to support pupils' learning.

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?

- Further improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - staff exploit the wide range of resources available to them, including the school's technological resources, to deepen pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- The school's mission of 'Awakening Potential' is at the heart of everything that happens at Bright Futures. The proprietor and school leaders have the highest aspirations for all pupils who join the school.
- The inspirational headteacher leads by example. She has an excellent knowledge of the needs of each pupil and has developed a team of high-quality school leaders and staff who share her outlook that 'only the best will do'. Everyone is expected to carry out his or her role to a very high standard. Consequently, the school has a strong capacity to improve still further.
- Pupils, staff and parents, in their questionnaire and telephone responses, overwhelmingly confirm that high-quality leadership that is friendly, approachable and effective has led to a positive ethos that exists throughout the school. 'Until my child arrived at Bright Futures I didn't feel I was listened to. Now I'm seen as a valued partner and I'm consulted regularly', is typical of the responses from parents.
- Excellent working relationships with residential care staff, therapists, social workers and other professionals involved in the lives of pupils help to ensure that their wider needs are met through multi-agency working.
- Leaders make high-quality training available for all staff and the intensive induction programme means that new staff are well equipped when they start working with pupils. 'We were very well supported when we arrived and this has continued throughout our time at the school. Some staff are now being supported to qualify as teachers', is how members of staff described their experiences.
- The proprietor and school leaders have an accurate picture of what the school does well and where it can improve. For example, the school improvement plan recognises that, following an audit, some staff use computers and tablets in classrooms more effectively than others. It recognises that the curriculum provision could be improved by extending the use of computers and tablets across the school. Training plans are in place to ensure that this happens by the end of this academic year.
- Leaders are open to feedback and welcome the challenge and support that they receive from an external consultant. Over time, this has resulted in rigorous systems for monitoring the work of the school and improving the way pupils' progress is tracked and recorded.
- The excellent curriculum is designed to meet the complex, individual needs of pupils. Most pupils arrive at the school after experiencing difficulties in their previous schools or settings and have significant gaps and delays in their learning. Consequently, the curriculum aims to fill these gaps as well as developing pupils' social, emotional, communication and life skills.
- The amount of time that pupils can spend in the classroom varies widely. Therefore, the curriculum is successfully enhanced and supported by an extensive range of extra-curricular and off-site visits. For example, visits to museums, safari parks, youth clubs and

local shops feature regularly in the timetable. These enable pupils to experience and cope with first-hand the joys and challenges they will face living in their local community.

- In addition, pupils have regular access to the school's own allotment, complete with on-site classroom. Pupils take responsibility for planning, planting and tending to the crops before deciding how the vegetables, fruit and flowers will be sold or distributed. This is a valuable introduction to the world of work and the life skills that they will need.
- A bespoke curriculum is provided for students who are post-19 (aged 19 to 24 years old). A small number of older students remain at Bright Futures and successfully follow learning programmes that are tailored to their individual education and personal goals. The programmes include guidance on employment, housing, health and personal relationships. Records show that, as a result of this approach, students are better prepared for independent living and meaningful work experience.
- The school provides outstanding opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values. For example, the school's curriculum celebrates different beliefs and cultures as well as promoting equality of opportunity and diversity.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional resources and support for pupils who are eligible to receive it. For example, personal computers were purchased following a discussion that took account of parents' views. Local authorities who fund pupils' places check on how the funding is being used and ensure that it is making a difference for pupils.

Governance

- Governance of the school is strong. The proprietor has a passion for improving pupils' opportunities in life. He is effective in both supporting the school and holding it to account.
- The proprietor has an accurate view of the school's work through regular visits, meetings with the headteacher and receiving reports from an external consultant who visits half-termly. The school improvement plan, jointly agreed with the headteacher, is incisive and focuses on the right priorities.
- The proprietor ensures that arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. He undertakes regular checks to ensure that agreed policies are delivered in practice and acts promptly on any recommendations found in external reports.

Safeguarding

- Arrangements for safeguarding are exemplary. The school complies with all elements of the independent school standards regarding the safety of pupils, including publishing a suitable safeguarding policy on its website. Staff are vigilant and ensure that safeguarding of pupils is a top priority.
- Staff implement all policies and procedures to keep pupils safe effectively, including transporting pupils from home or from the school's residential provision. Leaders have successfully incorporated safeguarding into the curriculum. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to look after themselves.
- Highly effective multi-agency working contributes to the strong safeguarding culture that is found in all aspects of school life.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils' work, observations of lessons, individual records and school leaders' records of teaching observations provide convincing evidence that both teaching and pupils' learning are outstanding across the school.
- Staff take great care in assessing pupils so that they can accurately identify the support and care that pupils need. This information is used by all staff and incorporated into the activities that are planned for pupils. Staff leave no stone unturned as they strive for the best possible provision for each pupil.
- Staff are successful in communicating with pupils and in helping them to learn within a calm and encouraging environment. Staff deploy resources carefully. They use resources well to support pupils' learning. For example, staff use a wide variety of methods to help pupils communicate and understand if they cannot express themselves verbally. These include pictures, sign language, cue cards and the use of information technology.
- Staff plan lessons very well. Staff are flexible, patient and know the different attention spans that pupils are capable of as well as their anxiety levels. As a result, many pupils can point to their steps in learning and explain how they have improved since arriving at Bright Futures.
- Excellent relationships exist between pupils and staff. Learning takes place outside of the classroom and pupils enjoy a strong rapport with adults who work with them. They have a well-founded trust that all staff will look after their well-being. For example, pupils' regular visits to the school allotment involve a walk and crossing a busy road. Pupils are well supervised and show a growing independence, knowing that, with the right support, they can manage this challenge successfully.
- Older students who are post-19 (aged 19 to 24 years old) receive the same high-quality teaching that leads to excellent learning and improved outcomes for them. Staff are very skilled at working with students within this age range, many of whom require intensive support and guidance. Staff plan numerous practical activities such as visits to local shops, posting letters and helping in a local retirement home. These encourage students to become more confident and independent as they meet unfamiliar adults.
- Within the last year, staff have introduced a new system for assessing pupils' progress. This takes full account of changes to the national curriculum and the increased expectations. This is already proving to be an excellent tool in helping staff to identify gaps in pupils' learning and plan their next steps.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- For many pupils, attending Bright Futures has been the first time that they have experienced success in school and enjoyed a period of stability.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of pupils' emotional and behavioural characteristics. They demonstrate impressive skills as they guide pupils through the transition period

when they first arrive at the school. The longer pupils attend the school, the more successful they are at coping with unfamiliar situations and learning how to respond when they feel upset or anxious.

- Pupils told the inspector how proud they are of the progress they have made. They value the school's positive approach and this helps to encourage and motivate them. Pupils successfully share their feelings and concerns. For example, policies or questionnaires that might affect them, including how to raise a concern or complain, are available pictorially, with facial images to reflect how they feel.
- Pupils' questionnaire returns and discussions with the inspector confirm that the school enables them to feel safe, confident and ready to learn. 'I'm much more confident now than I used to be. I've got more friends in school and I love going to youth club', is typical of pupils' comments.
- Pupils learn about themselves, including how they can stay healthy by exercising and eating sensibly. They know how to keep themselves safe and are aware of the different types of bullying that they may encounter, including cyber bullying. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and they are confident that, should it happen, staff would deal with it effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- High staffing levels ensure that pupils are well supervised throughout the day. Staff know pupils very well and employ successful strategies to calm situations and ensure that problems do not escalate. Records of any incidents are kept meticulously and lessons learned are shared with all staff.
- Classroom visits confirmed the excellent relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils and their peers. Pupils are proud of their school. Importantly, a few instances of low-level off-task behaviour did not have a negative impact or disrupt learning for others.
- Attendance levels are high and well above the national average. School leaders monitor these figures very closely and support families and residential care homes if pupils struggle to get to school for any reason.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Most pupils join the school with significant gaps in their education having experienced difficulties in their previous schools. This is often compounded by the severe and complex learning and emotional needs of many pupils. Pupils' starting points are generally well below those typical for their age.
- Most pupils make rapid and sustained progress because staff assess their needs so accurately when they arrive at the school and then provide a package of support that matches their individual needs. For some of the older and the most able pupils these plans can include courses leading to external accreditation, including functional skills qualifications, practical college courses and GCSEs. Independent careers advice aids pupils and their parents as they decide the future direction that pupils might choose.

- The school's own pupil progress information indicates that, after a period of transition, most pupils start to make the progress required to begin to address deficits of the past. This is particularly the case in reading, writing and mathematics. For many pupils, the steps they make are small ones but they are significantly greater the longer they stay at Bright Futures.
- The quality, breadth and relevance of the school's curriculum and stability of staff are key factors in successfully preparing pupils for each stage of their education, training or employment. Any change from routine can create stress for many pupils and increases their levels of anxiety. Staff work hard to reduce these pressures and equip pupils with coping strategies.
- Pupils enjoy the various curricular options open to them, including in the arts, technology and practical activities. Their motivation to do well in subjects that interest them is strong.
- It is not possible to compare pupils' outcomes overall or by groups with other schools nationally in a meaningful way. This is due to the very small number of pupils in each year group and the school's unique context.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- Sixth-form students benefit from flexible and bespoke pathways which deal well with their needs, interests and aspirations. As a result, most students join in with learning and practical activities well, have positive attitudes, and make excellent progress from their different starting points.
- Leadership of the sixth form is highly effective and has a very positive effect on improving the quality of the teaching. There is no sense of complacency as leaders strive to improve the provision and extend the options for students.
- Excellent careers support and partnership arrangements with other providers including local schools, colleges and employers enable students to be placed in locations that suit them best. This allows greater flexibility for students to study different subjects or experience various work-related settings. It also enables students' self-confidence and self-esteem to grow as they interact more with other students and with members of the wider community.
- All students continue to develop their mathematics and English skills throughout the sixth form, at whatever level is right for them.

School details

Unique reference number	134186
DfE registration number	877/6001
Inspection number	10026010

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 school
Age range of pupils	5 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	7
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Mr Paul O'Leary
Headteacher	Ruth Clifford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£46,436
Telephone number	01925 750249
Website	www.brightfuturescare.co.uk
Email address	school@brightfuturescare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bright Futures is a specialist independent provider supporting vulnerable young people from ages five to 25
- Pupils are diagnosed with a range of disorders and many receive support from child and adolescent mental health services, following assessments by a number of outside agencies.
- The school is located within easy reach of Lymm in Cheshire. There are currently 37

pupils on roll. Twenty-two pupils live in children's homes run by the proprietor. The remainder are day pupils.

- All pupils speak English as a first language.
- All pupils on roll have an education, health and care plan for emotional, behavioural and other difficulties or a statement of special educational needs.
- The school describes its mission as 'Awakening Potential' for all of its pupils.
- A number of local authorities' commission placements for pupils at Bright Futures so that their educational, health and social care needs can be met.
- Material change inspections of the school were undertaken by Ofsted on 28 May 2015 and 23 January 2017. Following these inspections, the school was authorised by the Department for Education to take more pupils and extend the age range of the pupils it admits.
- In the past pupils have attended courses at local colleges and at other education providers. No pupils currently attend these colleges or other education providers.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- This is the school's first standard inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in all classes. Most of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, headteacher, other school leaders and staff.
- The inspector had phone conversations with parents of pupils, the school's external consultant and an officer from a local authority that places pupils at the school.
- The inspector met with pupils both formally and informally. He looked at their work and the school's records of their progress. He also listened to individual pupils as they read.
- There were seven responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and one written submission.
- The inspector took into account 29 Ofsted questionnaires that were completed by staff.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school, including those available on its website. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Mike Hewlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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