

Weston Point College

Picow Farm Road, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4UN

Inspection dates

9–11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders' success in engaging pupils in learning, promoting their emotional stability and their academic success and ensuring that pupils move on to positive destinations are at the core of all this school does.
- Staff work very well as a strong team under the inspirational and pupil-centred leadership of the headteacher.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils are founded on trust, respect and care. These positive relationships underpin the success of the school.
- All staff work hard to engage the interest of pupils. Highly effective personalised learning programmes help pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Teachers plan activities carefully to meet the social, emotional and academic needs of pupils. Staff quickly adjust lessons and timetables when necessary, to help pupils remain engaged in their learning.
- Leaders and proprietors regularly evaluate teaching and learning so that pupils' outcomes are improving over time.
- Pupils make significant improvements in their attendance, behaviour and personal development during their time at the school.
- All pupils feel safe in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, both personally and online. All staff are highly trained and vigilant and have safeguarding as a priority.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Highly effective and bespoke advice supports them well so that they can access further education or training and maintain these destinations.
- Assessment systems are currently being redeveloped so that they are up to date with national changes in assessment and curriculum.
- External links with other effective schools are not fully established. Staff lack opportunities to share good practice about teaching and learning.
- School improvement plans do not focus sharply enough on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Proprietors and the headteacher have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.

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 the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the plans for development relate to the vision and priorities of the school and focus relentlessly on improving the outcomes for pupils
 - developing links with other schools to share effective practice so that staff can further advance their skills and understanding of highly-effective teaching.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by developing a system to track and analyse pupils' progress across all subjects which addresses national changes at key stages 2, 3 and 4.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietors and headteacher have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school sites are well maintained and resourced appropriately. Policies and procedures are up to date and safeguard the welfare, health and personal development of pupils. Risk assessments are in place and all necessary health and safety checks are completed.
- The school is effective in achieving its aims. All staff are tenacious and resilient when dealing with pupils. Staff are highly skilled in a calm and caring way, dealing with the many complexities presented by pupils. Leaders, proprietors and staff are committed to raising the aspirations of pupils who have been previously unable to engage with learning.
- The headteacher has high expectations of and for pupils and staff. He is relentless in pursuing his vision that the school will engage the 'hard to engage' and give all pupils every opportunity for a fresh start and the chance to succeed and achieve their potential. Leaders state that they 'will never give up on anyone' and pupils are appreciative of this ethos.
- Effective systems are in place for the performance management of staff. Leaders regularly observe the quality of teaching and learning and feedback strengths and weaknesses to staff and the proprietors. As a result, leaders plan appropriate training on aspects of teaching and learning, such as questioning and feedback.
- Staff are well supported through training, particularly relating to safeguarding and behaviour management. Further training is needed on the curriculum and assessment systems, in light of national changes. Teachers have few opportunities to learn from effective teaching and learning practice of other schools.
- Staff enjoy working at the school and share the vision of leaders. Staff say that they feel valued and work as a strong team, providing 'so much more than education' for the pupils.
- The curriculum meets the standard for independent schools and leaders ensure that good teaching develops pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. Pupils also benefit from additional subjects, including religious studies, art, science, geography, history and music. Staff go above and beyond to support any interests and talents of pupils which help them to re-engage with their learning.
- The flexible curriculum offered by the school offers pupils good opportunities to engage in a range of outdoor activities. This improves pupils' social skills, promotes their personal development and broadens pupils' experiences beyond their immediate neighbourhood. Pupils also have opportunities to contribute to the community, for example through work with the elderly and the Salvation Army.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and awareness of fundamental British values are promoted at every opportunity. Staff do not tolerate any prejudicial behaviour or language, and none was heard during the inspection.
- Senior leaders use alternative provision and work experience well to enable pupils to improve their employability skills, for example in animal management, hairdressing and

plastering. This, coupled with highly effective and bespoke careers advice, ensures that all pupils gain entry to and persevere with further education or training.

- Communication with parents and/or carers is effective. Leaders work successfully to develop strong relationships with parents/carers, and often work closely with a wide variety of external agencies to support pupils and their families.
- Pupils are referred to the school by various local authorities. All local authority representatives spoken with during the inspection are very happy with pupils' progress and experiences at Weston Point College. Representatives from the local authorities praise leaders' vision, staff expertise and told the inspector that the school was 'really turning lives around for young people'.
- Leaders track pupils' progress from their different starting points against national curriculum expectations. Teachers use these assessments well to plan future learning and monitor the progress of pupils. However, assessment systems do not reflect national changes at key stages 2, 3 and 4. New systems are being developed but are not yet in place across the school.
- The school improvement plan does not build on the school's own self-evaluation. It does not focus sufficiently on continuing to improve pupils' outcomes.

Governance

- Proprietors are closely involved in the school, visiting regularly and meeting with the headteacher regarding all aspects of the school. They know the strengths of the school very well and have first-hand knowledge of every pupil, as they meet and assess each pupil on entry.
- Proprietors have a clear vision and are committed to ensuring that vulnerable pupils are offered every opportunity to re-engage with their learning and begin to experience educational and personal successes.
- The school buildings and sites are fit for purpose. Classrooms are clean and bright and conducive to learning. Outdoor spaces are safe and well maintained. Proprietors ensure that the school's website is informative for parents and meets requirements for safeguarding, complaints and curriculum information.
- Proprietors use their extensive educational experience to support the headteacher in continuing to improve the effectiveness of the school. They are strongly committed to improving life chances for pupils but are not yet fully effective in challenging leaders to pursue the highest academic outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding which runs throughout the school.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, records are detailed and of high quality. Procedures for recruiting staff are robust, well documented and meet statutory requirements.
- Staff have completed all relevant and recent safeguarding training and they know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils. Staff liaise very closely and effectively with

external agencies, such as local authorities, health professionals and the police.

- Pupils feel very safe in school and leaders ensure that they are safe when they attend provision off-site, and this is supported by the views of parents and staff. All pupils spoken with during the inspection feel strongly that staff care about them and that they are respected.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- Teachers accurately assess pupils' skills when they enter the school. Leaders combine this with the variety of information they receive from schools to establish quickly a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil. This enables teachers to carefully plan work to meet the academic and social needs of pupils, using a wide range of activities and resources.
- High expectations of pupils and teachers' skilful behaviour management ensure that the majority of pupils engage with their learning. Staff work effectively to tailor lessons to meet the interests of pupils, and this helps to engage them in lessons. There are occasions, however, when the level of challenge is not high enough to stretch those who are capable of progressing at a more rapid pace.
- Teachers' in-depth knowledge of pupils' attainment, progress, aptitudes and personalities enables them to adapt activities and plans as needed to fill gaps in their learning and meet the pupils' emotional and social needs.
- Pupils' progress is tracked closely in all subjects. This enables teachers to identify any weaker areas of knowledge or skills and ensure that staff intervene quickly when progress slows or pupils start to fall further behind.
- Staff consistently address and challenge any incidences of inappropriate language and encourage pupils to make positive choices in their learning and behaviour. Support staff work closely with teachers and pupils to ensure that pupils are fully on task and are challenged to try their best and 'have a go'.
- All pupils take part in timetabled outdoor activities. These are skilfully integrated into the timetable to motivate pupils and to improve their self-esteem and confidence, while broadening their experiences and having a positive impact on their lifestyles.
- The majority of feedback to pupils is verbal and ongoing, allowing pupils to respond to comments immediately. Teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy but there are further opportunities, which are not always taken, to improve the literacy, spelling and reading skills of pupils.
- Teachers do not routinely set homework, but respond individually to pupils who are approaching exams or enjoying a particular topic.
- Leaders are continuing to improve the resilience and independence of pupils in the classroom to enable pupils to sustain their interest and achieve positive outcomes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school. Staff help pupils to settle quickly in the school. Most pupils respond positively to the calm, nurturing environment of the school, despite the great personal challenges that pupils face.
- Most pupils arrive at the school disenchanted with learning. Hence, pupils' attitudes to learning can and do vary. Staff, though, are tenacious in pursuing good progress and are successful in this, considering the individual starting points of pupils. Leaders are constantly striving to ensure that attitudes to learning continue to improve for all pupils, with the vast majority meeting that expectation.
- Pupils are warmly greeted by staff at the start of each day for breakfast and a welcome chat. This enables staff to quickly gauge the mood of pupils and deal with any emotional or well-being concerns, so that lessons can start promptly.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe both personally and online. Staff work hard to educate pupils about the dangers of drugs and substance misuse, and are vigilant over all aspects of well-being and safeguarding.
- Pupils spoken with during the inspection say that there are rarely any incidents of bullying and, if they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils trust the adults in school and say that they would talk to them if they had any concerns or worries.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted consistently well. They are aware of fundamental British values, for example through a display about the general election. Pupils are tolerant of other faiths and learn about religions other than their own through the curriculum, and through informal discussions and debates with staff. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce with pupils the rule of law and the expectations of pupils to become active and positive citizens.
- Links with external agencies are exceptionally strong as leaders pursue a holistic approach to meeting the complex needs of pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- As pupils settle into the school, there is a marked improvement in their behaviour over time. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff and to the typically calm environment.
- No pupils have been permanently excluded from the school. Fixed-term exclusion rates are falling and are used as a last resort. Pupils respond very well to the pastoral care from all staff and begin to flourish in the safe environment provided for them. Pupils at Weston Point College begin to experience tangible success, both academically and personally, sometimes for the first time in their educational history.
- Leaders are creative in ensuring appropriate work experience and off-site alternative provision for pupils. Placements are always closely matched to the interests and needs of pupils. Attendance and behaviour on these placements is overwhelmingly good. These placements provide pupils with valuable experience, which helps them when applying for college and training courses in the future.

- On each site, behaviour is well managed. When there is an incident of a pupil in crisis, staff are skilful in dealing with it in a calm and highly-effective manner. Pupils are appreciative of this caring approach, which helps them to feel safe. Pupils begin to positively modify their own behaviour. This prepares them well for the future.
- Attendance is transformed in a positive way for the vast majority of pupils. Some pupils arrive at the school after a period of absence from their previous school and now rarely miss a day.
- When pupils struggle to attend school for health reasons, leaders use creative solutions to ensure that pupils still receive an education and sit public examinations. This individualised approach, coupled with support from a range of professionals, such as psychologists and therapists, ensures that pupils continue to make good progress despite their challenging needs.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Information provided by the school, in addition to scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and folders, shows that over time and from their individual starting points, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils enter the school with very varied past experiences, but with typically low levels of attainment and attendance. The majority of pupils, particularly at the LEAP centre, make substantial gains in their literacy, numeracy and communication skills.
- All pupils spoken with during the inspection had clear ambitions for the future, telling the inspector that they hoped to secure training or further education to help them in their aim to become a police officer, a musician, a painter and decorator or a health-care worker.
- All pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress over time. Pupils overcome significant barriers to their learning to go on to secure and succeed in appropriate placements. Evidence shows that the support given to pupils in their behavioural, social and emotional development is having a very positive impact on their outcomes and future lives.
- Pupils make good progress in alternative provision and work placements. Staff are in frequent contact with providers to review progress and ensure that attendance and standards of behaviour are high. Communication between the school and alternative providers is smooth, and the school is clear about the good quality of education that pupils receive when they are off-site.
- Pupils are exceedingly well prepared for their next stages in education or training. Individual support and guidance are carefully matched to the needs and aspirations of pupils. Staff help pupils to investigate future careers and pathways, accompany them on visits to other settings, train them how to write curriculum vitae and help prepare them for interviews.

School details

Unique reference number	135749
DfE registration number	876/6013
Inspection number	10008531

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	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	21
Proprietor	Bridge 4 Learning
Chair	Chris Brannan
Headteacher	Timothy Whittle
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,100–39,845
Telephone number	01928 574667
Website	www.bridge4learning.org
Email address	staff@westonpointcollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2013

Information about this school

- Weston Point College is an independent special school registered to provide education for up to 30 students, aged 11 to 18 years, who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school is currently located at two sites in Runcorn, which are approximately half a mile apart. The main site is Weston Point College and the second site is known as the LEAP centre.
- There are currently 21 pupils on roll, all of whom are of White British heritage. All students have an education, health and care plan.
- The pupils are referred from a variety of local authorities in the north-west region. Pupils often join the school after a history of exclusion and/or long-term absence from

mainstream schools or other specialist provision.

- The school currently uses the alternative provider 'Power In Partnerships' to contribute to the education of some pupils.
- The aim of the school is 'to offer vulnerable and challenging young people the chance to re-engage with education in a supportive, safe and secure environment'. Their ambition is 'for all students to leave with an increased emotional resilience, independence and the ability to build positive relationships with others'.
- The school was previously inspected in March 2013.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning on both sites.
- The inspector met with pupils, both formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, proprietors and senior leaders and other staff. The inspector also spoke with representatives of several local authorities, the police, a representative of the alternative provider and a work placement supervisor currently working with the school.
- In addition, the inspector considered the views expressed by a small number of parents via the free-text facility on Parent View, but there were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey for those to be taken into consideration. The inspector took into account the views of 15 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed pupils before school, in lessons and during social time. The inspector also scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked at a sample of their books and folders.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation that included: information about pupils' attainment; the school's self-evaluation and action points for improvement; and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Helen O'Neill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 children looked after, 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 www.gov.uk/ofsted.

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 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017