

Raise Education and Wellbeing School

54–56 Holmeswood Road, Great Lever, Bolton BL3 3HS

Inspection dates

4–6 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and governing body have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. School leaders have very high expectations of pupils and staff. They lead by example and have created a culture of respect and tolerance.
- The broad range of subjects offered enables pupils to acquire key skills, knowledge and understanding. The academic curriculum is combined with targeted therapeutic support to ensure that pupils make dramatic progress in their social and emotional development.
- British values are promoted successfully and linked to the effective development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Pupils understand how they can keep themselves safe and the dangers of abuse and exploitation.
- Leaders ensure that effective systems are in place to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, they recognise that more could be done to improve the quality of learning in a small minority of lessons.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good over time and enable pupils to catch up academically. Pupils readily engage in learning, often for the first time. Occasionally, the tasks set do not stretch the most able pupils sufficiently. Sometimes the levels of qualifications that these pupils are offered do not match their capabilities.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. There is a sustained and impressive improvement in pupils' behaviour and ability to socialise. The tailor-made induction and assessment programme enables staff to understand the barriers to learning that each pupil faces. These barriers are then effectively removed. Attendance levels improve quickly and pupils enjoy school.
- Staff and pupils work together to prevent bullying and poor behaviour. Pupils trust staff to take rapid and effective action to nip problems in the bud.
- Pupils gain a variety of skills and qualifications which allow them to progress to further education, training or employment.

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, learning and assessment so that all pupils make rapid rates of academic progress by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged in every subject and reach their full potential
 - ensuring that academic assessment information provided in education, health and care plans is used consistently to set challenging academic targets
 - further refining the observation of teaching and learning to ensure that observers focus more consistently on the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- In the course of the first year of its existence, a cohesive and committed team has been established. Staff speak with great enthusiasm about the values of the school: fairness, equality, democracy, inclusion and ambition. The education that they provide works well for pupils who rapidly improve their behaviour, attendance and progress. The proprietor and chair of governors share the vision that a holistic approach to education, health and care will support the child and the family. This enables pupils to 'weather the storms of life' and make a fresh start.
- The community interest company has invested well in improving resources, and good teaching across a broad range of subjects is in place. The company has set ambitious goals to ensure that every aspect of the work of the school is outstanding. It plans to extend vocational resources even further.
- The newly appointed headteacher knows the school well and her evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement are broadly accurate. She has an accurate view of the quality of teaching as being good. There are gaps in the use of assessment information provided from referring local authorities. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to collect and use such information to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly of the most able.
- Robust arrangements are in place to improve the performance of teachers. The system used to observe teaching, learning and assessment is appropriate, but sometimes too much emphasis is placed upon what teachers do rather than what pupils are learning.
- The focus on setting short-term targets and capturing small improvements in learning increases pupils' motivation. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy is strong. In a small number of cases, the level of qualification offered to pupils is too low and does not enable them to be accredited to the standard of which they are capable.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Each pupil has a tailor-made programme linked to their age, needs and gaps in learning. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Most pupils in Year 11 are supported to move on successfully to the school's sixth form or into education, training or apprenticeships. Pupils access impartial, high-quality careers advice.
- Pupils successfully explore life in modern Britain by engaging in a range of visits and listening to trusted adults. During their time in school, pupils mature and show respect for the feelings of adults and their peers. There is a zero-tolerance attitude to the use of derogatory language.

Governance

- Governance is strong. The chair of governors has a good understanding of the work of the school and its impact. The proprietor frequently supports the headteacher in school to implement their shared vision.

- The proprietor and governors robustly hold the headteacher to account for the performance of the school. Governors hold frequent meetings and receive accurate reports on the school's performance. They have employed an external advisor to impartially evaluate the effectiveness of the school. Leaders recognise the need to refine further the way in which evidence is analysed to inform the self-evaluation report.
- Governors have made sure that all of the independent school standards are met. All required information for parents is up to date and available on request from the school. A website is in the final stages of development and the proprietor hopes to launch it early next term. The safeguarding policy and others are readily available from the school's website and directly from the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Recruitment procedures are rigorous. Staff are suitably trained to identify and respond to concerns, including concerns about sexual exploitation, online grooming and extremism.
- Staff understand the risks that pupils face due to their personal circumstances and emotional development. There are detailed assessments in place to minimise risks to pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The development of emotional and social maturity is seen by staff as a key requisite to enable successful learning. Pupils respond positively to the individualised approaches used by the school. Class sizes are very small and pupils often receive individual tuition. Staff set the bar high in terms of behaviour, but also recognise that for these pupils small steps in improvement need to be recognised and rewarded. This means that pupils can begin to develop self-esteem and positive attitudes to learning often for the first time.
- Good-quality teaching results in pupils making good progress in their learning across a broad range of subjects, including psychology, music technology, food technology and physical education as well as basic literacy and numeracy. Pupils achieve a range of entry-level qualifications that prepare the foundations for further study. However, in a minority of cases, these qualifications are not well matched to the capabilities of the most able pupils.
- Teachers use comprehensive assessments to assess pupils' emotional and social development and carry out baseline academic testing. However, the information about academic attainment received in local authority education, health and care plans is not always used well enough to set challenging targets and, as a result, rates of progress are steady rather than rapid.
- Staff focus on developing pupils' resilience and perseverance in tackling tasks and this works well. The high staff-to-pupil ratio means that there is always someone there to intervene when individual pupils struggle with learning.
- Teachers follow the school's policy and mark books regularly and correct pupils' work. Pupils' books show that marking enables pupils to understand where they have gone wrong and what they could do to improve.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils make huge gains in confidence and self-belief. The strong focus on building trusting and respectful relationships lies at the heart of the school's success. Pupils' attitudes to learning improve; pupils become much more positive about their relationships with teachers and other adults.
- During the inspection, pupils were observed interacting in a friendly and relaxed way with each other and staff at the school. Discussions with pupils indicated that they feel safe and know how to keep safe when they encounter risks. The curriculum helps them to be well prepared for life after school; for example, activities include cookery, understanding healthy lifestyles, housing, do-it-yourself skills, gardening and handling money.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. Displays of work, photographs and pupils' portfolios showcase the progress that pupils are able to make in understanding the wider world and how they can fit in.
- Records show that incidents of poor behaviour decrease over time and discriminatory or derogatory language is rare. If such incidents do happen they are quickly addressed through a system of restorative justice.
- Records show that bullying is rare because of the high levels of supervision in and around the school. Pupils are willing to tell staff of any problems and are confident that they will be dealt with effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The inspector spoke to more than half of the pupils in the school, and they were polite, friendly and respectful. It was clear that they had responded positively to strategies employed by staff to reinforce positive behaviours and attitudes.
- Pupils are encouraged to be responsible for their own actions by a restorative justice and rewards programme. The success of this programme is carefully monitored and modified to make sure it has maximum impact. The number of times that pupils with complex behaviours need to be held to account reduces over time.
- Staff receive appropriate training to support pupils with challenging behaviour. They commented in the questionnaires returned to the inspector about the excellent teamwork especially when pupils need intensive support. Pupils' behaviour improves as a result of this intervention.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are positive and this is reflected in the views of parents and carers who spoke very positively about the beneficial impact of the school on their children. Collectively, attendance rates remain below average for secondary schools, at around 75%. However, for many this represents a massive improvement on their previous attendance rates at other schools. A significant proportion of pupils were not attending school at all before coming to the Raise Education and Wellbeing school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils generally make good progress in their learning, particularly in subjects such as music technology, physical education, psychology and food technology, as shown through the work in their books, portfolios and teachers' assessments. Most pupils enter the school well behind in the basic skills of English and mathematics and they begin to diminish the differences between themselves and their peers.
- Baseline testing when pupils begin school is used effectively to plan learning in some subjects. However, this is not always linked to pupils' prior attainment at previous schools and, as a result, for a small number of pupils targets are not high enough. Targets set are usually challenging and take into account pupils' previously unsuccessful encounters with education.
- Many pupils are looked after by local authorities and have social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The wrap-around approach, good-quality teaching and high staff-to-pupil ratio mean that pupils' needs are well met. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their starting points.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Impartial expert careers advice is available to all pupils. Pupils are prepared well for the transition to the world of work, training or apprenticeship.
- Many pupils choose to remain in the sixth form to build upon the foundations that they have laid down earlier in the school.
- A good range of vocational activities are available via supervised work experience which is carefully monitored by staff. The school plans to extend the range of current resources to deliver some construction-related skills directly.
- In its first year of existence all pupils who left the school have gone on to appropriate destinations in employment, training or further education.

School details

Unique reference number	143026
DfE registration number	350/6004
Inspection number	10034043

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	11 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jason Steele
Chair	Elaine Bowes
Headteacher	Suzanne Watson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,479–94,528
Telephone number	01204 431946
Website	www.raisetheyouth.co.uk
Email address	hello@raisetheyouth.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Raise Education and Wellbeing School was registered as an independent special school in June 2016. It is registered to take up to 60 male and female young people aged from 11 to 25.
- The belief of the school is: 'It takes a community to raise a child, to support the family, to weather the storms of life.'

- The school is run by the Raise the Youth Foundation CIC Ltd. Many pupils are looked after by referring local authorities, including Oldham, Rochdale, Bolton, Trafford and Southwark.
- The new headteacher took up post in May 2017. The school previously operated as an alternative provider of education.
- There are currently 32 pupils on roll, aged 11 to 18. All have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs.
- The proprietor has responsibility for the performance of the school and is assisted by a governing body.
- The school does not use any form of alternative provision. However, pupils are educated at places other than the main site when they participate in physical activities and practical subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress. In addition, the inspector, visited six off-site venues, including libraries, community centres, sports clubs and leisure centres, to observe teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour. He carried out a joint lesson observation with the headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor, chair of governors, headteacher, leaders responsible for behaviour management and the school improvement partner. He spoke with pupils to seek their views.
- The inspector scrutinised records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, incidents of restraint and attendance. School policies and school documentation were also examined.
- The inspector observed the start of the school day and break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector took account of the responses given in 23 staff questionnaires. There were nine written responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) from parents or carers.

Inspection team

Andrew Johnson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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