

# New Bridge School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134517
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	328914
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Clare

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	260
Sixth form	101
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Steven Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Graham Quinn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Roman Road Hollinwood Oldham Lancashire OL8 3PH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7706999
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 6888223

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

New Bridge is a purpose built special school which shares a campus with a secondary school. Many students live in areas of social disadvantage and far more than average are eligible for free school meals. The large sixth form has its own building called the Learning Centre which is located two miles from the main school site. The students have a range of special educational needs including profound, severe and moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and physical disabilities. The large majority are White British with a small minority of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. Some of these students are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A small proportion of students are in the care of the local authority. There are twice as many boys as girls in the school. The nature of students' learning and complex needs means they are working well below national expectations.

The school has held specialist performing arts status since 2006 and has additionally achieved the Artsmark Gold award, Basic Skills Charter Mark, Healthy Schools Award and Financial Management Standards in Schools award.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

New Bridge is a good school which has outstanding features. These include aspects of leadership and management, the curriculum and the high quality care provided, all of which contribute to students' outstanding personal development. Students love to come to school. Their enjoyment is evident from their good attendance, the take-up of the wide range of extra-curricular activities and their positive attitudes to learning.

Students greatly appreciate the outstanding level of pastoral care they receive. Their progress is good throughout the school and some have done exceptionally well as a result of the school's good teaching and stimulating curriculum. Lessons are interesting and well paced. The monitoring of teaching is good and lessons are mostly well planned and meet individual needs. Teachers and support staff are skilful in incorporating students' medical and therapy needs into lessons. Students are provided with targets for both personal and academic development. Personal development targets are promoted and evaluated well. However, targets for learning are not used consistently in lessons to improve students' progress. Students are not always made aware of these targets and how they can help them improve their work. The curriculum is designed with much flexibility and is exceptionally well served by the specialist teams who provide the school's extensive learning, behavioural and multi-sensory support. It is enriched by varied opportunities for students to interact with the community and by a very strong focus on performing arts.

Students feel safe, secure and valued in school and have total confidence in the staff. Relationships between students and staff are excellent. Students have an excellent awareness of the rules for their safety in school and respond very positively to the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles. They are very well behaved around the school campus and in lessons. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and the local community. Parents are highly appreciative of the work of the school. Typically, they praise the, 'strong ethos of caring and belonging' that the school engenders.

Leadership and management are good overall. The key factor behind the school's effective improvement since the last inspection is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher supported by the school's senior managers. As a result, for example, good progress has been made in improving teaching and learning, and in developing the roles and accountability of middle managers. The school's electronic monitoring system provides useful information about how much progress individual students make. However, it is time-consuming for leaders to analyse the performance of groups of students, such as those working at each National Curriculum level, to identify where more improvement is needed. Students' progress is improving well. The commitment of staff and governors to continue moving forward and building on its successes confirms the school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Learning Centre is good. Because teaching is good, students, whatever their starting points, generally achieve well. They make good progress in their academic and vocational courses. In 2008, most students gained one or more external accreditations and six students gained GCSE art. Students really enjoy attending. They have excellent relationships with the staff and with one another. They say that the centre is, 'fantastic' with good

opportunities to develop interests, such as the popular rock band. They are certain that their voice is heard and that they contribute to the improvement of the centre. Students recognise the needs of others and are eager to be helpful. Their behaviour and commitment to work are both excellent and, as a result, their personal development is outstanding. The curriculum meets students' needs exceptionally well and they are provided with outstanding support and guidance. Student well-being is a priority and safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. Students are greatly helped in their transition to college or working life by their teachers and the Connexions service. Leadership and management of the Learning Centre are good. Senior managers monitor the performance of students and the quality of provision they receive well. Resources are used effectively and the centre provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Evaluate students' academic progress as rigorously as progress made in personal development and ensure students are aware of the learning targets set for them.
- Make data about students' performance more accessible to enable leadership and management to monitor more efficiently the progress of different groups and prioritise areas for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From students' individual starting points, achievement is good throughout the school and for many students with lower levels of ability it is outstanding. For these students, progress is very effectively underpinned by the exceptional gains they make in personal, social and communication skills.

Students of all abilities who are learning English as an additional language also make particularly good progress. A small number of students, notably those of relatively higher ability levels, make satisfactory academic progress. The school has taken steps to tackle less than good progress. Interim assessments of the present Year 11 suggest that these students are doing better than the last few cohorts.

Boys and girls make equally good progress regardless of their learning difficulties or ethnicity. Students generally do well in English, mathematics and science. Currently, progress is fastest at Key Stage 3, which reflects the ongoing improvement made by the school. Achievements in performing and visual arts are particular strengths. Older students acquire a complementary range of vocational and work experience skills. There has been a steady rise in the number and quality of GCSE and entry level qualifications awarded in Year 11 as the school responds to the improved performance of its students. The school successfully met its specialist targets in art, dance and drama.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Students say they enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance and outstanding behaviour. They take pride in helping others and count it a great honour to be a 'Buddy', for example, to a classmate who must use a wheel chair. As school council members and in contributing to community partnerships, students show initiative and self-confidence. The head boy and head girl provide excellent role models for younger students and take responsibility for guiding visitors around

school. Students show concern about the environment and to help wildlife have built nesting boxes. They develop very good knowledge of the paintings and music of other cultures. Students feel safe at school and say there is no bullying of which they are aware. They are confident that any minor disputes will be peacefully sorted out by staff members. Students readily talk about what it means to have a healthy lifestyle and at lunch they eat a healthy diet. They enjoy exercise and respond enthusiastically to opportunities to swim, play games, join in therapy sessions and dance. Students behave very safely especially while handling tools in practical sessions or in using the internet. Their outstanding personal qualities and good academic achievement stand them in good stead for the future when the time comes for them to move on from school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now frequently good, sometimes outstanding. Occasionally, lessons lack challenge and work is not matched to meet the needs of the full range of students in the group. Teaching is particularly good where lessons are delivered in a lively manner and make good use of sensory work, fully engaging and motivating students. In one lesson observed, the South East Asian music group provided this vibrant approach and staff ensured all students received good, stimulating experiences. Alternative forms of communication, such as the use of photographs, symbols and switches, are used very effectively. Teachers know their students very well and give them good time to respond in lessons. The strengths in teaching of the arts are used well to support wider improvement, for example, in mathematics through number and rhyme. Praise and encouragement are used generously to keep students interested in their learning. As a result students are enthusiastic and they enjoy learning immensely.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school has an outstanding curriculum that is broad, balanced and very effectively meets the range of needs in the school. Innovative use of information and communication technology has enabled the growth of music technology, and enabled wider curriculum access for students who use alternative augmentative communication with support and appropriate devices. The school has developed an excellent curriculum specifically for students with multi-sensory impairments. There has been much curriculum development at Key Stage 3, focusing particularly on curriculum access and suitability for students at either end of the school's ability range. The provision for students' personal, social and health education and citizenship is excellent. Performing and visual arts are particular strengths. Students are given excellent opportunities to perform and the school's innovative Luminus touring theatre group is creating great anticipation for next term. Visiting artists and musicians form just a small part of the extensive array of activities and clubs through which the school enriches the curriculum. The work related curriculum for older students is very good. It enables them to increase their independence and self-confidence and prepares them well for the future. The range of accreditation for higher attaining students at Key Stage 4 is being extended further to match students' needs even more closely.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The school gives the highest priority to ensuring the care, health and safety of its students. Current government safeguarding requirements are met. The child protection policy is regularly reviewed and known to all staff. Children at risk are swiftly identified and vulnerable students receive the help they need. Risk assessments in place are taken fully into account. Teaching support is well coordinated and valued. The school supports those with more profound disabilities extremely well and hydrotherapy is used very effectively. Excellent liaison with specialist and peripatetic services ensures students receive the targeted support that they need. The new learning support group and structured classes to meet the needs of autistic students enhance the school's range of provision very well. Personal targets challenge students to develop their social and inter-personal skills. Students know these targets and are reminded of them daily. Learning targets are also set, but students are not always as familiar with these as they are with their personal targets. Each student's progress is monitored well both in lessons and over time. Parents affirm that the school works with them very well and that they are treated as valued partners in their children's education. Students are very well supported in the transition from school to college or employment. The school provides an extended range of activities for students during all holiday periods and at the end of each school day that is a model of good practice.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher has successfully crafted a centre of good and excellent practice. He is supported well by a strong, committed and cohesive management team. Effective structures promote accountability and middle management has been strengthened. There is a good commitment by all staff to the school and the vision for the school is widely understood and shared. Staff development is valued and has led to good improvement in the quality of subject and pastoral leadership. Self-evaluation is generally used well to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses and to establish appropriate priorities for school improvement. To check on the progress of different groups of students, an electronic data system is used. This is time consuming and checks do not take place sufficiently frequently to provide senior managers with a clear enough picture of the progress of groups such as higher attaining students who are working within National Curriculum levels.

Governance is good. Governors attend the school's academic and pastoral monitoring boards. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Equal opportunities are promoted exceptionally strongly to ensure the well-being of all students including the most vulnerable. Community cohesion is good. The school is a multi-ethnic community which promotes respect for all races and religions. It demonstrates this through its strong links with a wide range of schools and community groups and effectively promotes inclusion opportunities for its students. Wider and more systematic opportunities for students to learn about the diversity of lives in the United Kingdom and to form links internationally are less developed. The school's specialism has had tremendous impact on the diversity of the school's curriculum, particularly in art and design and drama. This has led to cross-curricular projects and exciting work with local schools, community and theatre groups. The school has

excellent accommodation and makes efficient use of resources. It provides good value for money.



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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for talking to the inspectors and for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and now I am writing to tell you what we found out. I have asked your teachers to read this with you if you would like to have some help.

New Bridge is a good school and I could see why so many of your parents and carers wrote to me to say it was 'fantastic'. They told me how pleased they are with how much it helps you. I agree with them that all your teachers and other adults care about every one of you and look after you really well. All of the inspectors could see how happy you are at school and that you enjoy your lessons a lot. I enjoyed the school council meeting very much. I was very impressed with the sensible way you spoke up and gave your views. It was really good to hear about how much you look after one another, the good work that you do and that you have so many friends at school.

You are making good progress in your work and you do especially well in art and drama. This is because the school provides you with some really exciting lessons and the teaching is good. It was lovely to see that there are so many certificates for you to work towards. Your school is very good at giving you the chance to work with students from other schools and with different people who help to make learning really interesting. The Learning Centre gives older students good opportunities to try different types of work. I saw some very professional work being done at the salon and café, where you serve members of the public very well.

Your school is so good because your headteacher and the other managers are good leaders and they are always trying to make the school better for you. I have asked them to think how you can use your learning targets better so you make even more progress. I have also asked them to keep checking that you are all making equally fast progress. I am delighted that you have such a good school to go to and hope that you keep on trying hard and enjoying everything that you do there.