

Alder Brook Primary Partnership Centre

Walnut Road, Winton, Salford, M30 8LE

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The vast majority of pupils return successfully to mainstream school or on to other provision which meets their needs.
- Progress in personal development for the vast majority of pupils is good and outstanding for some.
- Pupils understand quickly how they need to behave in lessons, which helps them to achieve well.
- From varying levels on entry each pupil's progress is tracked carefully and the vast majority of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Very strong partnerships exist with parents and the local community, which contributes to pupils' achievement.
- The effective headteacher is highly respected by all. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher.
- The management committee makes a good contribution to leadership.
- Pupils are polite and behave well.
- There is virtually no bullying and pupils feel very safe and secure.
- Pupils' views are highly valued and acted upon.
- The work the unit does to prevent exclusion from mainstream school is highly effective.
- Teachers have high expectations of the amount of work pupils will complete in each lesson.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils could achieve more in English and mathematics if they always knew exactly what their individual learning target was, what they needed to do to improve through marking, and they spent more time in lessons working on their own or in a small group.
- Training for teachers is not always sharply focused exactly on the targets set for them and the details are not as yet passed on to the management committee in sufficient detail.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector took account of the school's self-evaluation and looked at the development plan, minutes of meetings, records of lesson observations and targets set for teachers, and the pupils' progress tracking document.
- The inspector visited four lessons and an assembly and held discussions with staff, a member of the management committee and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to two parents and took account of one response on Parent View.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and attended a school council meeting.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alder Brook is a short-stay centre which provides for pupils who have either been, or are, at risk of being excluded from mainstream schools.
- The management committee is responsible for secondary pupil referral units as well as Alder Brook.
- All the pupils have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and a minority have additional learning needs.
- Pupils usually stay at the unit for three terms.
- The large majority are dual registered with a mainstream school.
- A small minority have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are boys, most pupils are of White British origin and the majority are eligible for extra funds provided by the pupil premium.
- The acting deputy headteacher reverted to classteacher for the summer term 2012, after 18 months acting, when the seconded deputy returned. He became substantive deputy headteacher at the beginning of the autumn term 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase progress for all pupils in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that each pupil knows what their individual target is in each lesson
 - limiting time spent in lessons on teacher exposition so that pupils spend more time working independently or in small groups
 - giving pupils more information about how well they have done and what they need to do next through marking.
- Increase the percentage of good or better teaching by:
 - ensuring that training is always sharply focused on the needs of individual teachers identified through lesson observations
 - giving the management committee more information about improvements made in the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils enter the unit with low skills in English and mathematics. Almost all make good progress and narrow the gap between themselves and their peers. This is because pupils' rapidly increasing personal development enables them to begin to learn better and achieve to their potential.
- Progress in reading is good. Reading skills are practised each day and they are applied well in other subjects. Many pupils develop a love of books when they discover that they enjoy reading.
- Information and communication technology is a strength of the school. Pupils confidently use laptops and a range of other equipment to research topics such as nocturnal animals or use software to paint pictures. The work printed out shows that there is pride and good attainment in this subject.
- Pupils' personal development is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. The school's own tracking shows that most pupils achieve high levels in personal development before they leave the unit.
- There is no difference in the progress of different groups of pupils. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, boys, girls, those from minority ethnic groups and those eligible for additional funds such as the pupil premium.
- Pupils are assessed carefully on entry to the unit. This shows what they can do and what they need to do next. The unit sets each pupil learning targets in English, mathematics and personal development and meticulously notes progress on the school's 'tracking document'.
- Pupils' progress is reviewed each half term. If any pupil is identified as being at risk of not achieving their target, action is taken quickly to ensure that this does not happen.
- However, progress towards targets is not always as swift as it could be because pupils do not spend enough time working on their own targets in English and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils who attend the unit for short periods of time make excellent progress in personal development. This means that they are able to continue their education in the mainstream school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is good. Some teaching is outstanding. Teaching enables most pupils to make good progress and some to make outstanding progress in personal development. The amount of teaching requiring improvement has decreased since the previous inspection and the amount of good teaching has risen steadily.
- Learning in lessons proceeds well when pupils are working at just the right level either independently or in small groups. For example, in a mathematics lesson two pupils worked well with two teaching assistants. They learnt at first hand by handling three-dimensional shapes, counted the sides and points and learned names such as 'hexagon'.
- Teachers effectively support improvement in pupils' reading skills. This is tackled both individually on a daily basis and in small groups when all pupils have the same book and they take turns to read and answer questions about the story.
- Pupils enjoy lessons especially when they have been out to the zoo or to the Trafford Centre and they come back with ideas they can use in their writing. Pupils with special educational needs use the photographs they take, which means that they can complete good pieces of writing.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils is good. As the lesson proceeds pupils receive detailed verbal information about what they need to do to improve. They sometimes do not receive as much information through the marking about what they need to do next. Pupils respond well as they

want to please the staff and are keen to do better.

- Sometimes, however, the teacher spends too long talking to the class at the beginning and the end of the lesson which limits the time available for small group work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are welcoming and polite and behave well almost all the time. They attend well and work hard and their attitudes to learning are positive. This helps them to learn well and make good progress.
- Students show that they care about each other and willingly open doors for adults to walk through and say thank you and well done to their peers. The school council representatives know the qualities they need to show to have the best chance of being re-elected. One boy was clear that he would need to be 'impartial' in this role. Other pupils are keen to secure a budget from the headteacher so that they can improve the range of choices of board games available in classrooms.
- Staff are consistent and very skilled in maintaining a good working atmosphere at all times. Staff observe and record evidence of pupils' behaviour in different situations and this is collected to identify rewards. For example, those pupils who have the best scores from the dining room are taken out for a meal.
- Pupils learn strategies in assembly to control their behaviour and feelings. For example, 'think before you speak' or 'a problem shared is a problem halved'. They decide together what would be a good action to accompany the phrase, which acts as signals when they are needed.
- Pupils feel very safe and well cared for and there is virtually no bullying. Pupils' growing confidence enables them to take increasing responsibility for their own behaviour. However, sometimes some pupils could be allowed more opportunities to use their self-control.
- Both parents and pupils are delighted about the progress the pupils make and they know that this is because they are so well supported by everyone.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has steered the school well through an unsettling period. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together. They are ambitious for the achievement of the pupils and are successful in driving improvements.
- The staff work well in teams and model high standards. They share the aspirations of senior leaders for the pupils and use any additional resources allocated for individual pupils to good effect.
- The unit evaluates itself well. Plans made for improvement are effective because they are detailed and time-scaled and focus on the correct priorities.
- The curriculum is well organised and meets the needs of its pupils well. It includes ensuring that they have the opportunity to understand why others may hold extreme views, and think about how they feel about remarks and actions that might harm others.
- There are many exciting opportunities for pupils to get involved with such as holiday clubs and themed after-school activities such as 'magic science' and experiences that reflect the multicultural nature of the local community.
- The local authority supports the unit well by allocating Improvement Partners to work with the school who know the school and the specialist nature of its work.
- Partnership with parents contributes significantly to the achievement of the pupils. The experienced and highly skilled Family Support Worker ensures that pupils and their families receive the best possible support.
- Although targets set for teachers have a good effect on school improvement, training is not as yet as well matched to individual needs as it needs to be.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- has recently been reviewed so that it meets the needs of the primary unit much better as it now includes a primary headteacher
 - includes a special school headteacher who provides specialist challenge and support
 - provides good financial and resources management and ensures that the pupil premium is allocated appropriately
 - ensures that all statutory duties including safeguarding are met.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133678
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	402580

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Paula Boshell
Headteacher	Michele Cowperthwaite
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2010
Telephone number	0161 9212650
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