

Inspection of Excel and Exceed Centre

Buller Street, Bury, Lancashire BL8 2BS

Inspection dates: 9 to 11 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have a positive view of this calm and friendly school. They appreciate the care and kindness that adults show to them. Pupils are warmly greeted by their cheerful teachers as they start each school day. As one pupil said, 'Staff are nice to be around.'

Pupils behave well. Staff help pupils to manage their emotions. Pupils learn to treat others with courtesy and respect. Pupils said that bullying is rare. They are confident that any incidents will be dealt with quickly by leaders.

Staff get to know pupils well. This helps new pupils to settle into school life quickly. Pupils form close and trusting relationships with staff and their peers. Pupils are strongly supported by staff to develop an appreciation of learning.

Leaders are determined that pupils receive every opportunity to succeed. They ensure that pupils benefit from a curriculum that is closely matched to their needs and interests. This ensures that pupils achieve well.

Pupils' well-being is given the highest priority by all adults in school. Pupils feel safe. They know that staff are ready to listen and act on any concerns or worries.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to make a successful return to mainstream education, training or employment. To achieve this aim, leaders have designed a carefully organised, broad and engaging curriculum. Older pupils and students in the sixth form benefit from detailed and helpful careers advice. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

The curriculum that leaders have planned identifies the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. Across subjects, curriculum plans ensure that pupils acquire new knowledge in a logical order. For example, in mathematics, pupils develop their understanding of algebra in well-ordered steps.

Teachers plan interesting activities which capture pupils' attention. For example, in art and design, pupils' drawings reflect their hobbies and interests. Staff develop pupils' art and design skills in carefully ordered steps. Leaders ensure that classrooms are attractive and well decorated.

When pupils join the school, leaders check how fluent and accurate they are in reading. Through the curriculum, teachers ensure that pupils develop fluency and accuracy in reading. Systems are in place to support any pupils who need additional reading support. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of interesting texts and books. They borrow books from the well-stocked library. However, pupils have limited opportunities to read in school and in the hospital. Leaders are taking steps to

increase the time that pupils have to read for pleasure. For example, teachers have recently increased the curriculum time that sixth-form students spend reading in class.

Pupils at the school have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders work closely with a team of professionals to ensure that these needs are accurately identified and met. Leaders show determination in ensuring that pupils get the help that they need. Each pupil has a detailed plan of support. Staff use these plans to provide the help that pupils need. This ensures that pupils learn the planned curriculum.

Pupils join the school at varied points in the school year. Most have missed periods of education prior to arriving at the school. These pupils arrive with gaps in their knowledge across a range of subjects. When pupils arrive, teachers complete detailed checks to identify precisely what knowledge pupils have remembered. Staff liaise closely with pupils' mainstream schools to find out about their previous learning. Leaders ensure that this range of information is used to match the curriculum to each pupil's individual needs and abilities.

Pupils' personal, social and emotional development takes the highest priority. Pupils find out about different techniques to help them to feel calm. They learn to build resilience and independence.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the world. They learn to appreciate differences, for example in religion or sexuality. Pupils understand that all are equal. The curriculum includes the content which meets the statutory requirements of relationships and sex education.

Leaders place a high priority on improving pupils' attendance. Leaders work closely with staff in the hospital to share information. This ensures that everyone understands the importance of pupils attending school regularly. Pupils appreciate the incentives that staff provide to come to school. Through a wide range of strategies, leaders ensure that pupils' attendance improves. For example, pupils earn gift vouchers for high attendance.

Staff are expert in managing pupils' complex behaviour and emotional needs. They help pupils to understand the impact of their actions on others. Professionals from the school and hospital work closely together to address and support pupils' emotional needs.

Leaders are very considerate of staff workload when making decisions. Staff are cheerful and enjoy working at the school. They appreciate the support that leaders provide, for example to support their well-being.

Leaders keep parents and carers very well informed about pupils' attendance and academic achievement. The school's website contains a range of useful information, including policies relating to the curriculum, health and safety, and behaviour.

At present, most aspects of monitoring, evaluating and developing the curriculum are undertaken by the headteacher and the head of education. Most teachers in the school have limited experience in developing the curriculum and checking its impact. Plans are in place to develop the leadership responsibilities of staff.

The members of the proprietor body have a precise understanding of their duties. They keep a detailed oversight of the school's performance. Members of the proprietor body give expert challenge and support to leaders. For example, they are supporting the headteacher with developing leadership structures in the school to strengthen provision. The members of proprietor body take careful steps to ensure that the school meets schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor body ensures that all of the independent school standards are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about how to stay safe. Staff teach pupils about the danger of gangs, drugs and alcohol. Pupils learn about how to form safe and appropriate relationships, including when online. Pupils know that they should speak to staff in school if they have any concerns.

Staff are well trained. They understand pupils' particular vulnerabilities. Staff use this knowledge to spot any signs of possible abuse or concern. They understand how to report any concerns, and leaders act swiftly to resolve them. Members of the proprietor body make regular and detailed checks to ensure that the school is a safe place to be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The COVID-19 pandemic has limited pupils' opportunities to read independently. This means that pupils have had less time to develop their fluency and enjoyment in reading. Leaders should ensure that they extend the time that pupils have to enjoy reading a wide range of high-quality books and texts.
- Leaders are in the process of changing and extending the leadership structure. At present, teachers have limited leadership responsibilities. They have no recent training or experience in some aspects of leadership, such as leading improvements to the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers benefit from high-quality training and support to become effective in their new roles.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	142675
DfE registration number	351/6004
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10203839
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	12 to 19
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 the sixth form	21
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cygnnet Health Care Limited
Chair	Edward Hall
Headteacher	Victoria Povey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£31,980
Telephone number	0161 762 7212
Website	www.cygnethealth.co.uk/locations/cygnnet-hospital-bury/excel-exceed-school
Email address	VictoriaPovey@cygnethealth.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 to 28 June 2017

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about school life. They spoke with the head of education, the headteacher, members of staff and members of the proprietor body. They also spoke with the school's special educational needs coordinator and the school's pastoral and well-being lead.
- Inspectors considered responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The lead inspector spoke with one parent by telephone. They spoke with a social worker and a member of a virtual school.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including documentation in relation to safeguarding and information relating to the independent school standards. They looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors met with the school's head of education. The lead inspector spoke with the chief operating officer on the telephone.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lenford White

Ofsted Inspector

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