

Bury Secondary PRU Spring Lane School

Spring Lane, Radcliffe, Greater Manchester M26 2SZ

Inspection dates

2–3 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not been decisive enough in ensuring that all pupils benefit from the same good-quality experiences and opportunities as some do.
- There are noticeable differences in the quality of provision between sites. Most significant is the disparity in the consistency of high-quality teaching and learning.
- The key stage 3 curriculum does not inspire or engage pupils as much as it could. It does not spark their interest or aspirations enough to make them want to learn and come to school.
- Leaders and governors are not working strategically enough to garner a consistent view of the progress and achievements of all pupils academically, emotionally and behaviourally.
- Expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour in lessons across the whole school are not consistently high enough.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Some teachers are not sufficiently organised and are ill-prepared for lessons. In part this is because they are not using the assessment information available to pinpoint what should be taught to support pupils' learning and successfully challenge them further.
- Expectations of good behaviour are not consistent across all school sites. At the Radcliffe site the behaviour policy is not robustly adhered to. Additionally, Radcliffe site pupils are bored at breaktimes.
- A small proportion of pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have worked extremely hard and largely successfully to establish the one school. There is good capacity to continue to improve further.
- The provision for pupils in Year 11 is a strength. Pupils benefit from strong teaching, careers advice and opportunities to experience vocational placements with a range of alternative providers.
- The best chances for educational success back in mainstream education are offered to pupils through an exemplary reintegration programme.
- Pupils' care, welfare and well-being are paramount. Safeguarding is a strength. Parents, carers and pupils feel that they are very safe and well cared for.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently as good as the best by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations for all pupils' learning and behaviour in lessons
 - are well organised and prepared for lessons
 - use assessment more precisely in lessons to match work to pupils' abilities and ensure that they are supported to move on in their learning
 - challenge pupils to achieve all that they are capable of.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - decisive action is taken to remedy the difference in the quality of provision between school sites
 - all pupils benefit from being taught by high-quality teaching staff
 - the key stage 3 curriculum is sufficiently engaging, inspiring and purposeful to ensure that pupils want to learn and come to school
 - there is a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent
 - leaders, including governors, work together strategically to establish a clear, consistent view of the progress and achievements of all pupils academically, emotionally and behaviourally.
- Further improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that:
 - expectations for behaviour are consistently adhered to
 - provision for pupils at breaktimes offers more interest and purpose.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have worked extremely hard since the school opened in 2015. They have thoughtfully and with determination brought three separate schools together, located on three different sites. However, leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not been decisive enough in remedying the stark differences in the quality of provision at one of the sites. At the Radcliffe site the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent and there is a lack of certainty about the progress and achievement of pupils over time.
- Staffing is stable, consistent and of a high quality at both the Park House and Milltown sites. There is a profound knowledge of pupils and expectations are high. However, at the Radcliffe site there are few permanent teachers. Although some supply teachers have worked in the school for over a term, high expectations have not been instilled sufficiently. This is in terms of how they teach; how they use assessment to support pupils' learning; and how they encourage pupils to have a positive attitude to learning.
- Leaders have worked effectively in establishing a consistent approach to academic assessment across the whole school. On two of the three sites this information is used well to inform leaders about how well pupils are doing and what they need to do next. Targets are set and comparisons are made against pupils' potential. However, despite the collection of similar assessment information on the Radcliffe site, there is limited strategic discussion by the whole senior leadership team about the progress and achievement of these pupils. Leaders and governors are not able to make year-on-year or, where appropriate, national comparisons; nor are they able to discuss whether or not these pupils are being sufficiently challenged.
- Leaders are keen to develop a means by which they can measure the emotional and behavioural progress of pupils as well as the academic. To this end, they have established a useful tool to assess pupils' behavioural development and also their personal development and emotional literacy. However, this information is used quite disparately across the school. Leaders have not brought this information together sufficiently to gain a holistic picture of each individual pupil.
- An appropriate range of subjects is taught at key stage 3. Pupils benefit most from being taught by a few teachers from the other sites. Information and communication technology (ICT) and art are popular. The art department enables pupils to reach high standards. This is evident in the generally good-quality and varied artwork around the school. However, overall the key stage 3 curriculum is not sufficiently engaging, nor does it consider pupils' aspirations. It does not offer pupils a sense of purpose to encourage them to want to learn and come to school. Pupils commented to the inspector that they saw pupils on the other school sites engage in activities in the community but 'they didn't do much outside of school'.
- By contrast, the curriculum for key stage 4 pupils at Park House and Milltown is strong. As pupils join these sites, the flexible approach of staff ensures that if a pupil has a talent or interest in a particular subject, everything is done to accommodate them by offering them a personalised pathway to success. A strong combination of good careers advice, relevant, associated qualifications and an expertly coordinated opportunity for

work experience or training at an alternative provider ensures that pupils feel listened to and valued. For those pupils who are unsure about what they would like to do in the future, taster sessions are available.

- Leaders are respected and have the commitment of parents, pupils and the majority of staff. However, morale is not high everywhere. At the Radcliffe site, leaders are aware that some staff are unhappy and feel that they are not as supported as they could be when dealing with pupils. These staff see the stark differences between the school sites and want the best for all pupils. Leaders are well aware of this and are working hard to address issues. To this end, they have recently set up a staff welfare working party.
- Leaders are honest in their views about the school and their self-evaluation is accurate. The school is led by an experienced senior leadership team and a headteacher who is clear about his vision for the school. Leaders have been sincere about their shortcomings. They are clear about what now needs to be done and have the capacity to improve rapidly.
- Curriculum subject leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. They benefit from regular opportunities to meet with colleagues from other schools and participate in professional training. They share the learning from this to improve and develop the whole staff team. As a result, they make an important contribution to improvement in their subject.
- The use of pupil premium funding is uneven and not fully effective. Funding is used in a variety of ways, particularly in supporting pupils' attendance and social and emotional well-being. However, it is not used effectively enough to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, and specifically pupils in Year 7 to Year 10, achieve as well as they could.
- The leadership and organisation of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Identification of their needs is thorough and resources are of a good standard. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' learning and welfare needs and every effort is made to remove any barriers to learning. This ensures that pupils make good progress. They also succeed in their personal and social development.
- The leadership of links with the alternative providers that pupils attend is exemplary. There are robust systems for safeguarding and monitoring pupils' daily attendance. The close, mutual working relationships between the school and providers ensures that expectations of providers and of pupils are high. Very regular checks are carried out by the school and providers work extremely closely with school leaders to ensure that every individual pupil's learning, emotional and welfare needs are met.
- Another strength of the school is the programme of reintegration into a mainstream school. This is initiated as soon as pupils join the Radcliffe site. The assistant headteacher, who is responsible for this strategy, has an excellent understanding and a strong vision of the importance for pupils of success in mainstream education. He and his team work hard with the pupil, parents and the school that the pupil would like to attend, to make sure that returns to mainstream school are enduring and successful.
- The effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that, overall, the school is a calm and considerate environment where pupils

usually mix together happily. Older pupils are actively involved in the school community: for instance, they raise funds for charities. Alongside form time and the personal development curriculum, this helps them to understand the school's and British values. Pupils learn about the wider community, the rule of law, the importance of tolerance and the need to respect differences.

- The school is well supported by the local authority. This has been helpful to leaders in successfully amalgamating the three schools. Leaders' contribution to the work of the local authority is both valuable and highly respected. The headteacher is appreciated for his work with local secondary headteachers and his active involvement in developments arising out of the local authority special educational needs and/or disability review. The assistant headteachers who lead the school's work with alternative providers and reintegrating pupils back into mainstream schools are rightly held in high esteem by the local authority. Their procedures and monitoring systems are considered models of excellent practice.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been as effective as they should be at ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they could.
- Governors ask good-quality, challenging questions of school leaders in all areas of school life except the progress and achievement of pupils. In part, this is because the information they are given is not precise or detailed enough for them to gain a thorough understanding of the progress that all pupils are expected to and can make, specifically those pupils in Year 7 to Year 10.
- The governing body is rightly confident about the positive impact that pupil premium funding has on disadvantaged pupils by the time they reach the end of Year 11. However, because disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could across the whole school, governors have not been as effective as they could be in monitoring the impact of pupil premium funding for all pupils.
- Governors offer a good range of expertise to the governing body. They are conscientious in their responsibilities and enjoy taking part and contributing to the life of the school.
- The governing body has a good understanding of performance management procedures and supports the headteacher effectively in ensuring the management of teachers' pay.
- The governing body is diligent in carrying out its responsibilities to safeguard pupils and, to this end, has appointed a safeguarding governor to oversee and monitor safeguarding and welfare-related matters.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in school. Leaders have ensured that pupils have a very safe and secure environment by effectively promoting the message that safeguarding

is everyone's responsibility. Detailed safeguarding records are kept rigorously and regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors undertake regular and appropriate training, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism.

- Thorough and very regular checks are completed on all pupils who attend alternative provision or work experience placements. Frequent visits are made by school staff and safeguarding procedures are diligently checked.
- A dedicated team for pastoral support, including a highly effective safeguarding officer, oversees the care and welfare of vulnerable pupils and their families. The team offers excellent support and is highly valued.
- Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Highly effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning requires improvement because it is markedly inconsistent across the school. Spring Lane School is a place of contrast. At Milltown and Park House, teaching and learning are strong; pupils enjoy their learning and are taught by teachers who plan lessons carefully to meet their needs and aspirations. However at the Radcliffe site, teaching and learning are much weaker. Consequently, not all pupils get the same educational deal.
- Not all pupils benefit from the same high expectations of learning and insistence on behaviours that ensure that they are ready and receptive to learn. The high expectations at Milltown and Park House ensure that pupils are ambitious about what they can achieve. They are keen to do their best because they know adults care about them and will support them in their learning. They are excited by the goals that they set alongside their teacher because their aspirations are well catered for and inspire them to work hard. However, for the Radcliffe site pupils, work does not 'hook them in'. Pupils' workbooks show that the standard of work expected is too low. Too many lessons have little interest for pupils. As a result, some enter classrooms apathetically. They are reluctant to sit down to their work, often refuse to engage in a lesson, or are quick to distract others.
- The best lessons are well organised and teachers are well prepared. Teachers skilfully pick up what a pupil likes, what interests them and what will spark their curiosity to learn. They then put a good-quality package of learning together for each pupil. Teachers are quick to settle pupils and know exactly where pupils are in their learning for that day. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Questioning is used effectively to encourage pupils to talk, draw out their thinking and help them move on in their learning. Pupils are visibly proud of their achievements and are keen to tell visitors what they are doing and what they are going to do when they move on to college.
- However, at the Radcliffe site, too many lessons are ill-prepared and disorganised; resources are not used effectively to capture pupils' interest or imagination. In some lessons inspectors found teachers 'thinking on their feet'. For example, in one lesson, pupils were asked to create an advert for a voyage on the Titanic. Discussing the

features of an advert was vague. There were no visual examples to support understanding. As a result, opportunities were missed to engage pupils and make learning relevant to them.

- Teachers at the Radcliffe site do not use the assessment information that is gathered each half term effectively to plan lessons that precisely match the next steps that pupils need to take in their learning. At the Park House and Milltown sites, teachers check on pupils' learning regularly. By continually checking individual pupils' understanding, adults make an important contribution to securing the progress that pupils make in their subject areas. This is because these teachers focus very precisely on what individual pupils can do and their next steps.
- In the best lessons, teachers build skills and increase challenge as a pupil grows in confidence and resilience. In the weaker lessons, teachers are hesitant to offer challenge for fear of a negative reaction from a pupil. The lack of appropriate challenge prevents some pupils achieving all that they are capable of.
- Leaders passionately believe in fostering trusting and respectful relationships. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This has laid foundations for good learning to take place. Pupils feel cared for and listened to. There is a strong sense of nurture so pupils feel safe and secure.
- Teaching assistants are hard-working and skilful at calming pupils, encouraging them to learn and trying to engage them in their work. Their friendly but firm approach is appreciated by pupils. Pupils respond well to them and draw reassurance from their consistent approach.
- All parents who spoke to the inspector felt that their children were well taught. They felt that the quality of information given to them about their children's learning was good and valuable. They appreciated the very regular contact the school had with them about their child, often via a telephone call. They remarked that it was great when they got good news about what their child had been doing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This is because pupils' personal development, welfare and emotional skills are central to the work of the school. Teachers' and other adults' thorough knowledge of pupils and the strong relationships they build ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils can rebuild their confidence.
- Staff treat pupils with consideration and work hard to ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcome and valued. As one pupil explained, 'It is much better at this school because adults listen to you and try to help you out.' Adults model respectful and caring behaviour in the way they engage with pupils. In turn, pupils mirror this behaviour in some of the activities and events they get involved in, such as charity work and art projects with local community groups.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors praised the school and the work of the staff. Parents felt that their children were safe, much happier than in previous schools, and

looked after well. A number of parents were keen to say that their children had 'come on in leaps and bounds'. They also felt staff were 'approachable', 'supportive' and did their best for their children.

- Pupils told inspectors they liked Spring Lane. Some of them say this is the first time they have liked school. As a pupil said, 'I like this school because adults take time to understand you and you can have one-to-one support to help you learn.' They feel they are very well looked after by adults who are 'kind' and 'look out for you'. Pupils were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school and described it as a 'positive' place to be.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- At the Radcliffe site, lessons are regularly disturbed by low-level disruption such as not sitting down, refusing to work, occasional swearing and extended conversations between pupils about something unrelated to their lesson. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the behaviour policy is not enforced effectively enough to curb this behaviour quickly. The second is because many lessons are not capturing the interest of pupils or meeting their individual learning needs.
- However, this behaviour is not seen everywhere. At the Milltown and Park House sites, there is very little disruptive behaviour in lessons. Learning is personalised and very tightly meets pupils' learning needs, interests and aspirations.
- At the Park House site breaktimes are peaceful, calm and orderly. Pupils behave responsibly and enjoy the chance to chat, check their mobile phones and have a rest from their studies. At the Radcliffe site, although pupils behave in a relaxed, cordial manner and adults are deployed appropriately, there is very little on offer for pupils to engage them or encourage them to expend energy. The grounds are spacious and there is an all-weather pitch but there was nowhere to sit to talk and no games to play. One pupil asked if he could have a football but was told there weren't any. As a consequence of leaving pupils to their own devices, a group went to the far end of the playground, away from adults, and started smoking. Greater opportunities to engage pupils in purposeful activity may have avoided this situation.
- Despite this, overall pupils move around all the school sites in friendly manner. Adults are good at managing pupils' movement around the school buildings. They use calm and effective strategies aimed at distracting, defusing or calming a situation down.
- The systems for monitoring absence are meticulous and robust. Despite the diverse nature of the provision, including placements at a wide range of alternative providers, leaders can confidently account for every pupil on their register. As a result of hard work, attendance has improved across the school and is now comparable to national averages for pupil referral units. The attendance and pastoral teams provide good-quality liaison between families, the school and those professionals who offer support to those who need it. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. However, there is a group of pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders work diligently with this group and their parents to address this issue, with some notable successes. However, some pupils still do not attend school regularly.

- At the Park House and Milltown sites pupils' attitude to learning is at least good and often excellent. This includes those pupils who attend sessions with alternative providers. Pupils try their utmost to engage in lessons that are personalised to their interests and preferred learning styles. Inspectors saw pupils positively beaming at their achievements on a construction course. Their attention and interest are skilfully captured by the adults supporting them. Pupils value enormously the chances they are offered to re-engage in their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because leaders do not accurately know the progress that all pupils make each year or over time.
- Leaders have devised a good-quality assessment system that is effective where it is implemented. However, it has not been fully applied at the Radcliffe site and as a result leaders have no way of tracking pupils' progress from their starting points. Leaders know exactly how the system could work to enable them to have a clear picture of pupils' progress but they have been tardy in implementing it.
- By contrast, at the Park House and Milltown sites the assessment system is fully implemented and used well to follow and capture the progress of Year 11 pupils. Teachers use the information constantly to ensure that they are meeting pupils' needs and encouraging them to take the next step in their learning.
- At the present time, the school cannot easily compare the performance of different group of pupils other than for Year 11, nor are they able to provide information on patterns and trends in performance. Consequently leaders, including governors, cannot adequately analyse and challenge the achievement of pupils.
- Leaders rightly believe it is important to have a holistic overview of pupils' achievement – academic, behavioural, and in terms of their personal and emotional development. They have begun to establish systems to track pupils' progress in these areas separately. However, leaders admit that this information is still used anecdotally and not integrated into the whole picture of each individual pupil's personal and academic achievements.
- Pupils make good progress by the end of key stage 4. This is because the highly personalised approach to learning ensures that leaders and teachers tap into pupils' interests, and then capitalise on these to create a package of courses leading to qualifications. As one pupil said, 'I never thought I would get a qualification: now I am.'
- Apart from insisting that pupils study for qualifications in English and mathematics, leaders offer a wide range of subjects, including vocational areas. All courses contribute towards functional skills, entry-level qualifications or GCSEs. All courses are determined by each individual pupil's particular interests and ambition. A growing number are entered for and succeed in gaining GCSEs.
- The school provides very good quality careers guidance which builds on teachers' comprehensive knowledge of pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to be realistic but ambitious in their plans for the future. They are helped to make informed choices that support them in reaching their goals. Most pupils take up a place at college; some have gone on to university. Pupils have followed careers as diverse as mechanics,

engineering, zoology or the military. There are well-thought-out opportunities for work experience and vocational work with alternative providers, for instance in ICT and construction. Transitions are extremely well organised and managed carefully so pupils build up their confidence and the likelihood of success is maximised.

- The difficulties leaders have in being able to measure the progress of pupils on all sites means that it is hard to show how well all disadvantaged pupils are doing. Inspection evidence indicates a mixed picture. However, the school works hard to break down barriers such as low attendance and meet social and emotional needs. By the time these pupils reach the end of Year 11 they make good progress.
- Teachers are vigilant about meeting the needs of the pupils who are looked after. For example, staff work hard to help pupils overcome barriers such as gaps in coursework so that these pupils have a better chance of securing recognised qualifications.
- The school meets the needs well of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan so that they make progress at least in line with their peers. The school has been quick to recognise that a number of pupils have previously unidentified SEN and/or disabilities and put in place appropriate support.
- As soon as pupils and parents join the school on the Radcliffe site they are immediately engaged in a very effective reintegration programme. This programme works proactively to return as many pupils as possible to successful mainstream education. As a result of this very thorough and thoughtful programme many pupils return to mainstream and do well.

School details

Unique reference number	131506
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10046546

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

Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Chambers
Headteacher	Thomas Gledhill
Telephone number	0161 724 2900
Website	www.springlaneschool.bury.sch.uk
Email address	t.gledhill@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bury Secondary PRU Spring Lane School is a pupil referral unit that was formed in 2015. It brought together three separate existing pupil referral units, New Summerseat House, Milltown House and EPRU.
- The school comprises three sites. The Radcliffe site provides day six provision for key stage 3 and 4 pupils permanently excluded from mainstream schools. The Park House site offers GCSE to Year 10 and Year 11 pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties who have struggled to maintain a place in mainstream education. The third site, Milltown House, provides Year 11 pupils with supported access to vocational qualifications through alternative provision alongside a reduced GCSE and functional skills offer.
- The school mainly serves the Bury area, although a small number of pupils arrive from out of the borough.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. A number of these have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- There is an above-average proportion of pupils who have an EHC plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups being below the national average.
- Boys considerably outnumber girls.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- Almost all pupils join the school part way through their education.
- The school uses a range of alternative providers. These are currently Bury College, Achieve Training, EdStart, TLG Bolton, CSIN and Military Standard.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors also observed pupils during morning breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books, in their assessment files and case studies.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteachers and curriculum subject leaders. They spoke to the assessment manager and the special educational needs coordinator. They also spoke with the pastoral support, safeguarding and attendance officers as well as the person responsible for safeguarding checks.
- An inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair. She also met with a representative of the local authority. An inspector met with the school's education welfare officer and an educational psychologist.
- Inspectors took account of two responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and met with small groups or individual pupils to discuss their opinions about the school and their learning. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 34 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and a letter from a member of staff. They also talked informally with staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, an inspector spoke briefly with a few parents on the telephone.
- An inspector also spoke with a small representative sample of alternative providers and schools with which this school has worked.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: minutes of meetings of the governing body; information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance; and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Doreen Davenport

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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