

Wakefield Pathways School

Poplar Avenue, Townville, West Yorkshire, WF10 3QJ

Inspection dates 25–26 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders and governors have failed to sustain the school's outstanding overall effectiveness seen at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have deteriorated significantly and are inadequate.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. Some statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are not met. Health and safety checks lack sufficient rigour and so potential safety risks are sometimes unidentified, unreported and unrecorded. Some staff are not adequately trained.
- All groups of pupils underachieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Learning in the early years is inadequate as a result of weak provision. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils make inadequate progress. By the end of Year 6, they are not adequately prepared for the next stage of learning.
- The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is weak. Some staff lack the skills and knowledge required to teach these subjects effectively. Reading is not promoted well enough.
- Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are too low. Work provided often fails to challenge pupils to reach their potential.
- Information showing what pupils know and can do is not used well enough to provide activities that meet pupils' varying learning needs. Pupils are not provided with the support needed to do well. The role of teaching assistants lacks clarity.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is poor because too little time is spent developing their understanding of life in modern British society.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because they do not maintain their attention well enough when activities fail to engage their interest.
- The school does not have the ability to improve quickly enough. Governance is weak. Governors do not have the knowledge and skills needed to hold the school to account, including for making sure pupils learn in a safe environment.
- The roles of the assistant headteachers are underdeveloped. They do not contribute effectively enough to driving improvement forward.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and is leading improvement strongly.
- A consistent approach among staff in dealing with difficult behaviour is paying dividends. The number of incidents arising from behaviour issues has reduced significantly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed several lessons and parts of lessons taught by teachers and support staff. Two lesson observations were undertaken jointly with the two assistant headteachers. The headteacher and inspection team also examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- Meetings and discussions took place with pupils, the headteacher, assistant headteachers, members of the school's staff and three members of the management committee. A telephone conversation was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took into account the views of four parents who spoke with inspectors as they brought and collected their children. Seven parents responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View), however, because this number was below the minimum required to view the data, the opinions of these parents could not be taken into account.
- The views of 14 questionnaires completed by staff members were also taken into account.
- The inspection team studied health and safety documentation, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff, pupils' attendance data and the school's system for checking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Katharine Halifax

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The school meets the needs of primary-aged pupils, the vast majority of whom have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Some have additional needs, including learning difficulties.
- The small number of Reception-aged children spend some time learning alongside children from Years 1 and 2 and all receive education, which is in line with early years requirements.
- The majority of pupils live within the Wakefield district, with a smaller number coming from further afield.
- Most pupils are of White British origin.
- All pupils who attend have a statement of special educational need.
- An above average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The headteacher took up post in April 2014. There are two assistant headteachers. One has only been very recently appointed.
- Since the previous inspection the headteacher has appointed five new teachers who joined the staff in September 2014

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take urgent steps to secure pupils' safety in all key stages by:
 - improving the frequency and rigour of health and safety checks on the premises so that potential risks are swiftly identified and reported and urgent action taken to address them
 - providing staff training so that all staff are clear about what is needed to keep pupils safe both inside and outside the classroom
 - making sure that staff and leaders consistently refer to risk assessments, which identify the needs of each pupil when planning learning activities
 - improving the written records relating to safeguarding incidents so that they are clear and detailed enough and stored in a manner so that that can be used in order to prevent re-occurrence.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is at least good, in order to improve achievement in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils in all key stages, so that they can make good or better progress by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - ensuring that information about what pupils know and can do is used effectively to provide activities that challenge pupils of all abilities to reach their potential, especially the most able
 - providing training for staff so that the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are taught consistently well in all classes
 - increasing opportunities in classrooms for pupils to practise and develop their reading skills and to encourage reading for pleasure
 - making sure that all teachers provide clear direction to teaching assistants and that they more actively support pupils' learning in the classroom
 - planning work which pupils find interesting and challenging in order to hold their attention and ensure that their behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently good
 - supporting pupils to become more inquisitive learners by extending the range of learning activities and improving the quality of resources and the learning environment.

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that the school has the ability to improve quickly by:
 - developing the roles of the assistant headteachers so they are fully involved and equipped with the skills they need to check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, so that teaching and pupils' achievement improves at a faster rate
 - ensuring that governors have the skills and knowledge to hold senior leaders rigorously to account for quickly improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and, the school's work to ensure pupils are kept safe and secure is effective
 - ensuring all staff share in the aspirational vision for the school's future and that staff are motivated to do so
 - improving pupils' understanding of life in modern British society.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders and managers have failed to bring about enough improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has deteriorated considerably and there has been a significant decline in pupils' achievement, behaviour and safety across the school.
- Although the headteacher has put in place a clear plan to reverse the school's decline and knows exactly what is needed to take the school forward, her ability to improve the school quickly enough is significantly hampered because other leaders do not provide effective support. Furthermore, some leaders and staff have failed to embrace her aspirational vision and new ways of working. Staff lack the necessary motivation to bring about improvement quickly enough.
- Leaders and governors have not taken the necessary steps to ensure that safeguarding procedures fully meet statutory requirements. Inadequate training of staff means that the potential safety risks for individuals, such as those associated with pupils' behaviour, are not always identified or taken into enough account when planning learning activities. The school's written records relating to safeguarding incidents show staff diligence, however, they are not always sufficiently clear or detailed nor set out or kept in an effective manner.
- Although the school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, all groups of pupils underachieve. The pupil premium is not used effectively enough to support learning so that disadvantaged pupils do well.
- The headteacher is driving improvement strongly. Making sure that children learn in a bright and cheerful environment and that they can learn through curiosity and exploration is given a high priority. She has ensured that more challenging targets for all pupils are in place. Arrangements to measure and track pupils' attainment and progress have strengthened and are now more frequent and accurate. There are signs that achievement is improving, especially in Key Stage 2. However, all groups of pupils in all key stages still underachieve.
- As a result of the work of the headteacher, the leadership of teaching is starting to improve. The quality of teaching is now checked more rigorously by the headteacher. Targets for staff performance now link directly to the targets set out in the school's development plan. This information will be used to make decisions on teachers' future pay awards. Even so, the leadership of teaching is not effective enough. It relies too heavily on the work of the headteacher. The roles of the assistant headteachers, particularly in improving teaching are underdeveloped. They are not fully involved or equipped with the skills they need to check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, so that teaching and pupils' achievement improves at a good enough rate. Some staff have yet to receive the necessary training to improve their teaching skills and the pace of improvement in teaching is too slow. Teaching, therefore, remains inadequate.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The curriculum is improving. Recent changes have resulted in a sharper focus on the core curriculum areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Weaknesses in teachers' skills and knowledge in teaching these basic skills, however, continue to hamper pupils' achievement. The number and range of visits undertaken away from school are now being given more careful consideration to ensure they will have a clear and positive impact on improving pupils' learning.
- The school uses its allocation of the primary school sports funding to good effect. Pupils now have access to a wider range of different sports, for example, dance, basketball and rugby training. The range of physical education (PE) equipment has been extended and, as a result, pupils' participation in sports and activities across the school has increased.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is weak. Too little time is spent on developing pupils' understanding of life in modern British society. There are few meaningful links in place with the local community.
- The local authority was, until very recently, unaware of the significant decline in the school's effectiveness since the last inspection. The monitoring of the school's work has not been carried out effectively enough. At times, the headteacher has not received the support needed to bring about improvement. Although a school improvement partner has now been allocated to the school, and this is helping the school to move forward more effectively, much needs to be done in order to bring about improvement at a fast pace.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is inadequate. Over time, it has failed to offer sufficient support, guidance and challenge to senior leaders to prevent, halt or reverse the decline in teaching and pupils' achievement.
 - Governors' knowledge of how well pupils are learning is weak. They do not have a good enough

understanding of the data related to pupils' performance. They have too little understanding of the quality of teaching and rely too heavily on reports from senior leaders. Governors have failed to recognise the significant decline in quality since the last inspection. This hampers their ability to challenge school leaders.

- Governors do not ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Governors make sure that the appropriate checks are undertaken on staff and that any recruitment is carried out fully in line with requirements. However, their checks on the safety of the premises from visiting the school and questioning the school's leaders about arrangements and procedures are not undertaken often enough or with sufficient rigour. Some fixtures and fittings are in poor condition and the potential risks have gone unidentified, unreported and unrecorded. The governors acknowledged during the inspection they were unaware of on-going safeguarding incidents or weaknesses in record keeping.
- Although governors ensure that the school is financially stable, they do not ensure that funds, such as the pupil premium are spent to good effect. They are unaware of the impact this funding has on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Activities are not always interesting enough to maintain pupils' attention. The pace of learning is sometimes slowed because staff have to deal with disruption caused by a few pupils.
- A recent improvement to the ways in which pupils' behaviour is managed is paying dividends. There is, for example, an agreed and more consistent approach for staff dealing with any difficult behaviour. Pupils are clear that if they hear staff count down from 10, they are required to calm down. Most are responding well to this consistently applied strategy. School records show that the number of incidents arising from behavioural issues has reduced significantly.
- A few parents expressed concern that the few pupils who exhibit some of the most extreme behaviour were not always managed well enough. Incidents of difficult behaviour were observed during the inspection; staff handled most appropriately and calmly with minimal impact on learning.
- Attendance is close to the national average for primary schools. The headteacher is aware of a small group of pupils who are persistently absent. Effective strategies to improve the attendance of this group are now in place and as a result, more pupils are now attending more regularly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. Staff are not clear enough about what is needed to keep pupils safe both inside and outside the classroom. Staff training on health and safety matters is inadequate. Potential risks to pupils' safety within the school are not always identified, reported or recorded. Actions to minimise risk, therefore, are overlooked.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure and have an understanding of some of the forms bullying can take.
- The majority enjoy attending school.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- As a result of inadequate teaching over time in all key stages, the majority of pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics. This is seen in the work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' attainment and the rate of progress over time. Weak teaching has led to a significant decline in pupils' achievement across the school.
- The learning environment in the majority of classrooms provides pupils with few opportunities to learn and develop through play and exploration or to become excited and challenged. As a result, pupils are not inquisitive learners and this hampers their achievement.
- Too often, expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are too low. Work provided often fails to challenge pupils to reach their potential. The information collated about what pupils already know and can do is starting to be used more effectively by some staff to plan future learning that reflects pupils' varying needs. For some pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, progress is starting to speed up. However, this practice remains too variable across the classes. Too often, work for the most able pupils is too easy.

- The quality of teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics is too variable. Some staff, such as those who are new to the school with recent experience of working in mainstream primary schools, have a good understanding of current approaches to teaching English and mathematics to this age group. Not all staff have undertaken the necessary training to keep their teaching skills and knowledge up to date. As a result, some lack the skills and knowledge required to teach these subjects effectively.
- The teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics is inadequate. Opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading skills and to develop a real sense of enjoyment of reading for pleasure have been overlooked. Classrooms lack the resources to enable pupils to read often enough. Too many teachers lack the skills to teach writing and mathematics effectively.
- The quality of support from teaching assistants varies too widely. Some support learning well. However, too often, teachers do not provide clear enough direction as to the role teaching assistants are to play within each classroom. As a result, teaching assistants do not always achieve an effective balance between supporting pupils' learning and managing pupils' behaviour and this reduces their effectiveness. Disadvantaged pupils do not always receive the support they need to do well.
- The headteacher is clear about what is needed to improve the quality of teaching. Targets set for learning, for example, are now more challenging and this is starting to speed up progress for some pupils. Plans are already in place to ensure reading books are available in classrooms. However, teaching is not improving quickly enough to overcome the legacy of underachievement among pupils. Not all staff are fully embracing the necessary changes and this is hampering efforts to improve the school's effectiveness.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The achievement of all groups of pupils in all key stages is inadequate. Poor teaching over time, along with a legacy of low expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving have contributed to a decline in standards of achievement in reading, writing and in mathematics. Over time, from their starting points, progress is too slow and, as a result, standards of attainment are exceptionally low.
- After a poor start to their education in the early years, pupils make inadequate progress in Key Stage 1. Their achievement is particularly poor in reading and writing. Pupils are not given work that enables them to build their reading and writing skills well enough on what they already know and can do.
- Although some pupils are now doing better in Key Stage 2, their achievement overall is still inadequate due to weak teaching in the past. Targets set for learning are now more challenging and this is helping to speed up pupils' progress. However, teaching is not yet strong enough to ensure that pupils catch up quickly enough from past underachievement.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium underachieve. Variances in the achievement between this group and others in English and mathematics are not being closed fast enough. Support for this group has over time been ineffective. However, disadvantaged pupils are now starting to make better progress. Staff, such as a higher-level teaching assistant, are helping to develop pupils' communication skills through play. An additional support worker now provides extra learning support.
- The most able pupils underachieve. Work is often too easy and they are not challenged to achieve their full potential.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is inadequate. The school library contains an appropriate range of books and is a colourful and calm space where pupils can relax and learn. However, pupils, especially older ones, do not access books often enough because provision for reading in classrooms is underdeveloped. Pupils lack encouragement to read in their classrooms, where the environment is often stark and uninspiring.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- Children in the early years make inadequate progress from their starting points, including in their social, emotional and academic development. This is as a result of weak provision and teaching.
- Teaching over time is inadequate. Activities provided, both inside and outside the classroom, fail to match the varying learning needs of children well enough. Although staff record, track and celebrate children's progress, they do not use this information effectively enough to plan for children's next stages in learning and this slows children's progress. Furthermore, parents are not fully involved in sharing their knowledge about their children's achievements with the school.
- Although children are now offered more diverse opportunities to learn through play, activities do not yet support children to become inquisitive learners. There is too little choice and the learning environment is

of poor quality.

- Relationships between staff and children are good. Parents say that their children settle well into school life and their behaviour improves as they become more familiar with the routines of the school.
- Although leaders are making some improvements, overall leadership and management is inadequate. They have not ensured that the quality of teaching is effective and that children are kept safe.

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	133340
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	449542

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Groves
Headteacher	Dawn Coombes
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2010
Telephone number	01977 723085
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