

High Well School - South Hiendley

High Well Hill Lane, South Hiendley, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S72 9DF

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Some of the school's middle leaders have not yet developed the skills needed to drive forward sustainable improvements in teaching and achievement in their subject areas.
- The poor attendance of some students is slowing their progress.
- The behaviour of some students is not managed consistently well.
- Students' progress over time is inconsistent and this results in some students not achieving to their full potential.
- There are missed opportunities to develop students' skills in reading and writing.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively and this slows students' progress.
- Students do not always respond to teachers' marking in order to improve their work.
- Shortcomings in the school premises and resources have limited the speed of school improvement. While leaders work hard to make the most of the facilities, it is difficult for staff to meet the special educational needs of some students, especially those with additional learning needs such as autistic spectrum disorder.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership and management are decisive and the climate for learning and the quality of teaching is much improved since the previous inspection.
- Staff morale is high as a result of their confidence in the school's leadership.
- Governance has improved since the previous inspection and is committed to further improvement.
- Strong pastoral care has a significant impact on students' improving behaviour as well as their social and emotional well-being.
- Parents value the improvements they see in their children's behaviour and attitudes.
- Every student benefits from a personalised learning programme that focuses on their behaviour and academic performance and serves to improve their achievement. Staff are flexible in responding to students' needs and often do so at very short notice.
- The school is well supported by its local authority and it receives effective support from other establishments.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and parts of lessons in a range of subjects. Two observations were undertaken jointly with the executive headteacher. The inspection team also examined the quality of the work in students’ books.
- The inspection team held meetings and discussions with students, senior and middle leaders and other members of the school staff. They also met with the Chair and another member of the Governing Body and separately with two representatives of the local authority.
- The school has two sites several miles apart. The inspectors visited both of these sites and a visit was also made to a local venue where some students receive tuition. In addition, inspectors talked to staff about the school’s use of alternative provision.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspection team to consider. Inspectors held telephone discussions with two parents and considered the evidence the school presented about the views of parents.
- The inspection team scrutinised health and safety documentation, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff, data on students’ attendance as well as internal and external exclusions, and the school’s system for checking students’ academic progress.

Inspection team

Henry Moreton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Claire Patton

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school provides for students aged 11 to 16 who have a statement of special educational needs for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties who live in or around Wakefield.
- Many students have additional special needs including autistic spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well above the national average.
- All but a handful of students are White British and all students are English speakers.
- In January 2014, the executive headteacher was appointed through an arrangement with Wakefield local authority and the Wakefield pupil referral units (the Priory Centre and the Springfield Centre). This arrangement was formalised in March 2014.
- The two pupil referral units provide additional personnel and also support professional development to High Well School.
- Since the summer of 2014, the school has taught all Year 11 students off-site at the Knottingley Centre.
- Some students are educated in settings near to their home and at the time of the inspection four students were educated in this way.
- The school uses three different centres for alternative provision: Reverse the Cycle, Riding for the Disabled and the U-CAN centre.
- The main school site is sub-divided into zones for learning for different year groups: Years 7 and 8, Year 9 and Year 10.
- In September 2015, the school is to be relocated into refurbished premises in Pontefract.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - training the middle leaders for their roles so that they develop the skills needed to drive sustainable improvements in teaching and achievement in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that the impact of the poor accommodation on students' progress, including those with additional special needs, is minimised.
- Improve the behaviour and safety of all students by:
 - exploring all avenues available in order to persuade hard to reach students who are persistently absent to attend school regularly
 - ensuring the management of students' behaviour is consistent across the school including making certain that school policies on the use of rewards are applied consistently by staff.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good so that students make good progress, particularly in reading and writing by:
 - ensuring teachers deploy teaching assistants more effectively to support students' learning
 - making sure students respond appropriately to teachers' marking
 - taking opportunities to use homework to develop students' reading
 - giving students sufficient opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well and have steered it through some difficult times. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that achievement and the quality of teaching are good.
- The positive impact of leadership can be seen in the improvements in behaviour, attendance and academic attainment of most students. Attendance is rising and exclusions are falling. All staff are committed to making sure that students do not miss out on their schooling and move on to gainful employment or training when they leave. All this demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. Leaders' vision for the school is shared by staff as reflected by the very positive responses and comments in the staff questionnaire. Staff morale is high. A typical staff comment was, 'The school has made huge improvements since I started.'
- Middle leaders are beginning to have an impact on the quality of learning across the school. For example, they have ensured that the quality and quantity of work in students' books in English, mathematics and science is starting to improve. However, some have not yet fully developed the skills that are necessary to have the maximum impact on teaching and achievement in their subjects. This includes supporting teachers in their work to provide interesting and stimulating learning environments.
- The headteacher and the governing body ensure that performance targets for staff are linked to students' achievement as well as to the school's improvement plan. This information is used to make decisions on teachers' pay. This is helping to drive improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is more effective and that teaching is improving. This has resulted in classes being more settled. A new focus on class-based learning means that there is less movement around the building. This has led to a calmer environment since the previous inspection, with fewer interruptions to learning.
- Every student has an individual academic and pastoral support package that is appropriately targeted to meet their special educational needs. This also supports equality of opportunity because every student is encouraged to do their best. The Year 11 students now benefit from learning that is highly individual with a strong focus on accreditation and social and emotional development.
- There are four key assessment points during the year which means that student progress is monitored more closely than before. While there is evidence to suggest that this approach is having an impact, the school is looking to develop a new assessment policy which will give it even better information on the progress made by students over time.
- School leaders make provision for the few students who are not able to sustain full-time attendance. This is well managed by the parent support worker and takes place in safe settings such as community centres and libraries near to the student's home address.
- An extensive range of visits away from the classroom enrich the curriculum. These make learning more interesting for students and help to sustain their commitment to their education. Provision for physical education, sport and outdoor education, including a residential experience, is good and students enjoy taking part. Students are prepared for life in modern Britain by the many visits within the community and further afield. School staff take the older students out regularly into the local community, for example to buy provisions which they use to cook lunch. Such activities help them to participate in society and to learn useful life skills. The students who spoke to inspectors have an appropriate understanding of parliament and democracy.
- The school makes adequate provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It does this by very close support and guidance for every student and through targeted interventions. During the inspection the Year 11 students took part in a community visit and a visitor developed their appreciation of art and design. Students have a good understanding of right and wrong. Inspection evidence shows that students took an active interest in November's Remembrance Day.
- The school fosters good relations and incidents of poor behaviour are now quickly, and more successfully, tackled.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide extra support, including one-to-one support. As a result, disadvantaged students are making similar progress to others in the school. Parents support the work of the school and those spoken to could not be more pleased in the improvements they see in their children's behaviour. This is having a positive impact on their lives.
- School leaders closely monitor the attendance of students, including those attending the alternative provision. Any absence is pursued immediately by the parent support worker and the school has close relations with local agencies that help to support students' needs.

- The school pays particular attention to supporting its leavers into appropriate work or training. This helps them make informed choices about their futures. Parents told inspectors how pleased they are with their children's changed attitudes as a result of the school's actions.
 - The school receives good support from the local authority including securing new leadership, strategic support from the authority's pupil referral units and the new premises for the start of the next academic year.
 - Safeguarding procedures and policies meet current requirements and governors oversee regular checks. As a result, the school's policies are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Members of the governing body have been steadfast in their work on behalf of the school. They bring a range of expertise and take every opportunity to develop their skills by attending training.
 - Governors carry out corridor walks and observe what takes place in classrooms so that they have first-hand information about the work of the school.
 - Aably led by the Chair, governors are becoming better able to offer challenge, as well as support, to senior leaders. The governing body has developed an effective system for checking the performance of all staff which rewards good teaching. Underperformance is tackled robustly.
 - The governors know the school well and have learned from the monitoring inspections that the school has received from Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI). They now have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and understand the school's data.
 - Financial resources are managed effectively and, with the support of the local authority and the bursar from the pupil referral units, the deficit has been successfully addressed. Governors' prudent management of pupil premium funding has enabled them to support disadvantaged students effectively. As a result, the outcomes for students are improving.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Students' improved attitudes to learning contribute to the improvement in their outcomes. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that all students are interested and engaged in all lessons. Some students still do not take enough pride in their work.
- A minority of students do not show these good attitudes and behaviour and this limits their learning. In these cases, some staff are too tolerant of poor behaviour, including unacceptable language and students refusing to comply with school policies. The management of their behaviour is not consistent.
- A supportive ethos is promoted throughout the school and this is reflected in the attitudes most students show to each other and adults. However, the school's reward policy is not always used consistently or effectively with the result that sometimes poor conduct is overlooked or inappropriately praised.
- Nevertheless, staff do provide students with very good pastoral support, which helps to ensure that learning is less frequently interrupted by difficult behaviour.
- Parents told inspectors that their children's behaviour and attendance improves the longer they are in school. Incidents of difficult behaviour are reducing and now rarely escalate because of the good relationships between most students and staff.
- Staff go out of their way to help students and respond flexibly to their needs. Consequently, levels of attendance are improving. Whole-school figures fluctuate considerably but, overall, 75% of students improve their attendance from their starting points. Nevertheless, there remains some stubbornly hard to reach students who are persistently absent.
- Incidents of exclusion are fast declining. Fixed term exclusions, while still high, have more than halved since September 2014. None of the younger students has been excluded since then. An intervention mentor delivers a social, emotional and behaviour skills package which has contributed greatly to reducing exclusions.
- All students also develop their personal and social skills by attending all, or some, of the school's external providers. Behaviour in alternative provision is carefully supervised by support staff. The use of this resource motivates students and supports their improving attendance and behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. This is because there are still too many incidents of poor behaviour.
- Safeguarding training is undertaken on a regular basis by staff and effective work is undertaken with external agencies to ensure students are safe.
- The school's parent support worker plays a key role in ensuring students are safe. For example, if students are not at school, she will make a home visit to find out why. In addition, school staff liaise with different agencies, such as the mental health service, to ensure that students get the help and support they need. This strong pastoral care and support are helping students to improve their attitudes to school and assist their emotional well-being.
- Students spoken to by inspectors say they feel safe and secure in school because staff are there to help them. They know where to turn if they feel troubled.
- Outdoor education as well as the many trips and visits play a significant role in developing students' understanding of how to keep safe and modify their sometimes unsafe conduct.
- Those students who spoke to the inspectors showed a good understanding of the many forms bullying can take including homophobic- and cyber-bullying.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and therefore students' learning requires improvement. Students' behaviour is not always tackled consistently by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, learning in lessons is still slowed by incidents of poor behaviour.
- The majority of teaching assistants and teachers work closely together in order to meet students' special educational and additional needs. Effective teamwork is apparent around the school and in most lessons. However, in some classrooms, teaching assistants' time is not used effectively by teachers to promote and support good learning. In these cases, learning slows and behaviour dips.
- Students' work is marked well and feedback encourages students by telling them precisely how well they have done. It also gives clear guidance on how their work can be improved. However, students do not always respond appropriately by taking the actions their teachers suggest to improve their work. This means that teachers are unsure if the feedback about their learning has been fully understood by students; this hinders the rate of students' progress.
- More accurate assessment of students on entry now takes place and this complements a more rigorous induction programme. This means that students make a smoother transition into school and from Key Stage 3 into Year 10.
- Staff use their detailed knowledge of the students to set work that suits their needs. This enables most students, including those who are disadvantaged, to make satisfactory or better progress. The teaching of mathematics, for instance, has improved this year because teachers are paying greater attention to students' presentation and by planning lessons that sustain students' interest.
- The quality of work in students' books supports leaders' and inspectors' view that the quality of teaching over time is improving.
- The teaching of reading has also improved. A whole-school approach to literacy is newly established with training for all staff, daily intervention for students with below average reading skills and a different literacy theme each week. This has had a positive impact since its introduction in January. Although there are more regular opportunities to read in class, opportunities are missed to develop their reading through homework.
- Overall, homework is not used as well as it should be. As a result, students do not practise their skills enough and this slows their rate of progress. Student's progress in writing is sometimes slow because they are not given sufficient opportunities to write at length and produce longer pieces of work in English and other subjects.
- Good learning in physical education lessons and regular participation in sport means that many students develop a keen interest in keeping fit and developing a healthy lifestyle.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. Current school data show that while some students are making good progress academically and in their personal and social development, a minority of students are not.
- Students with additional special educational needs are not making good progress. This is partly because of

the poorly furnished and equipped classrooms which are not conducive to good learning. While leaders work hard to make the most of the facilities, many of the classrooms are uninspiring and unattractive settings in which to work.

- Students gain much from attending the alternative provision since it motivates them to attend and behave well. It also supports the development of their social and life skills which help prepare them for life after school.
- Some of the more able students are making good progress because of the individual curriculum and most reach their potential in English and mathematics. This is because their needs are effectively planned for through individual curriculums and the effective pastoral support they receive.
- All of the more able Year 11 leavers in 2014 achieved pass grades in GCSE. These were in English, mathematics and science. School records show that all but one of the eight Year 11 leavers in 2014 are in gainful employment or further education and training. All of the students whose attendance improves achieve some form of accreditation in preparation for their futures. These are in the key skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Good planning ensures that many of the less able students also achieve the accreditation of which they are capable, providing their attendance is good enough. The expertise and dedication of all staff means that if these students attend and behave well they achieve their potential. Those students that miss too much school do not do well.
- The older students are making better progress than previously because of school leaders' decision to locate them in a separate annex where they get more effective personalised support and a higher adult to student ratio. Being away from the main school site, where many have had poor experiences in the past, has contributed to their improved attitudes to school.
- From their starting points there is no difference in achievement between the disadvantaged students when compared to other students nationally. There are no gaps with others in the school as measured by their GCSE or other academic outcomes and disadvantaged students are making similar progress to others in the school.

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	131526
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	453791

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Kelsey
Headteacher	Will Carpenter
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2013
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