

Wathen Grange School

Church Walk, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 1PZ

Inspection dates

10–12 July 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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietor has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Routine checks on water temperature and safety of portable appliances have not been completed.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a high turnover of staff. This has resulted in inconsistent teaching. The proprietor has not acted quickly enough to improve recruitment and retention.
- The quality of teaching and learning is variable. A few teachers do not use prior information to plan learning that meets the needs of pupils. The depth of teachers' questioning is inconsistent. As a result, pupils are not always challenged sufficiently well.
- Systems for managing the performance of the leaders are not robust. As a result, the acting headteacher is not appropriately supported or challenged.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's assessment policy is consistently applied by all staff. Teachers' written and verbal feedback varies in quality and does not help all pupils to move their learning forward.
- Outcomes for pupils are variable. Their progress is weak due to turnover of staff. Where teachers have left, in some subjects, such as information and communication technology (ICT), pupils have been unable to complete their work.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. The acting headteacher has introduced an assessment recording system supported by standardised tests. This is used effectively to set targets and report on progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and apply the behaviour policy consistently. As a result, most pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and during unstructured times.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that the independent school standards are consistently met
 - improving recruitment and retention to ensure consistency and continuity across the curriculum
 - further developing systems for the performance management of school leaders and embedding the recently introduced systems for teaching staff
 - making sure that there are accurate systems in place to record details of temperature checks on the water supply
 - ensuring that required checks on portable appliances are completed
 - ensuring that all staff apply the school’s assessment policy to make sure that all pupils benefit from high-quality feedback
 - making sure that pupils have continuity and progression in their learning to build on what they already know and can do.
- Develop the consistency of teaching so that all pupils are able to make strong progress across the curriculum, and improve their outcomes, by:
 - making sure that all teachers use information on pupils’ prior learning to plan and deliver teaching that is matched to the needs of pupils
 - making sure that all teachers use effective questioning to deepen pupils’ understanding and provide appropriate challenge
 - ensuring that pupils are able to complete work and have the opportunities to catch up on missed work, especially in history and geography.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The proprietor has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met in full. At the time of the inspection, there were no systems in place to check and record the temperature of water. As a result, the water accessible to pupils in washrooms and classrooms presented a risk of scalding. Testing of the portable appliance equipment had not been carried out within the required timescale. Therefore, pupils had been given access to electrical equipment that had not been checked for safety. This was corrected at the time of inspection; however, systematic checks were not in place to ensure that this was completed on time.
- The proprietor has not addressed issues with recruitment and retention quickly enough. Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the leadership team and a high turnover of teaching staff. The school has been unable to secure stability in staffing for a long period of time. This has impacted negatively on pupils' progress across the curriculum. The teaching of history, ICT and geography has not been consistent. In these subject areas, pupils have been unable to complete work they have started or extend their learning.
- Leaders have developed a caring and supportive culture within the school. There are high expectations around respect for others and a clear focus on providing personalised learning opportunities. The vision and ethos for the school are communicated well and, where staffing is stable, staff show a good understanding of the aim of the school. Some teachers are not in post for long enough periods of time to understand the needs of the pupils and forge positive relationships.
- Leaders' assessment of the quality of teaching and learning is accurate. The acting headteacher undertakes regular monitoring of lessons and pupils' work. A system for the performance management of teaching staff has recently been introduced. Staff benefit from reflecting on their teaching practice and identifying areas they need to develop. This process has enabled staff in permanent roles to access additional training appropriate to their roles. Staff who completed the inspection survey say that leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement. As a result, the school's self-assessment is precise. It reflects what the school does well and details what needs to improve. The acting headteacher uses this to plan and refine actions to secure improvements.
- The acting headteacher has developed the curriculum to include vocational opportunities. Pupils engage well in practical lessons, such as food technology and art, and make strong progress from their starting points. The formal curriculum is supported by additional activities, including ice skating, bowling and outdoor activities that enhance pupils' social development. Pupils choose these activities. This encourages appropriate discussion and debate. As a result, pupils' self-confidence increases over time and they learn new skills such as teamwork.
- Leaders have developed positive opportunities to help pupils to grow spiritually, socially and culturally. Pupils enjoy community-based activities and visits to museums. They learn about religions and festivals, including Ramadan and Chinese New Year. They also learn fundamental life skills, including how to plan journeys and budgeting. As a result, pupils

develop independence. The activities also help pupils to learn about different beliefs, resulting in respect for diversity and the opinions of others. As a result, they are prepared for growing up in British society.

- Leaders have introduced an assessment policy. This is implemented well by permanent staff members. Pupils benefit from high-quality written feedback that helps them to improve their work when they are taught by permanent members of staff. Targets are appropriately stretching and provide the right amount of challenge. Staff who teach less frequently at the school do not routinely apply the policy. Where this policy is not applied well, pupils make repeated mistakes and do not complete work.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans. The headteacher is also the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). All pupils are assessed upon admission to the school using standardised tests. Targets are set in line with (EHC) plans and reviewed regularly. The school's information and work in pupils' books show that pupils make steady progress towards their targets because of appropriate intervention and support. Annual review information for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is positive. Reports show that the vast majority have made strong progress towards their personalised targets, including mathematics, literacy and reading.
- The majority of pupils complete homework in core subjects in line with the school's homework policy. Homework set is appropriate to their needs and abilities and is used well, particularly in English to reinforce key spelling patterns, practise phonics and develop sentence structure.
- The school regularly reports on the progress of pupils. Parents and carers say they are happy with the communication they get from the school. As a result, they know how well their children are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Governance

- The proprietor oversees the work of the school. Systems to ensure regular checks and monitoring are not effective. Consequently, at the time of inspection, the independent school standards were not met in full.
- The proprietor and board of directors have ambitious plans to increase and strengthen the staff team. Although there are detailed plans in place to improve staffing, work on recruitment and retention of staff has not been done quickly enough. As a result, lack of continuity of staff appointments impacts negatively on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The processes for performance management of school leaders are not formalised. Leaders have not been able to access professional development and training appropriate to their role. As a result, the acting headteacher has not been sufficiently supported or challenged.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects current statutory guidance and is published on the school's website. Paper copies of the policy are available upon request.

- All necessary recruitment checks have been carried out on staff members. The single central register meets requirements.
- The designated safeguarding leads have completed training appropriate to their role. They are clear on their responsibilities when it comes to keeping children safe.
- The staff are appropriately trained. They are vigilant and confident in recognising the signs of abuse and neglect.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Since the last inspection, there has been a high turnover of teaching staff. Staff have also joined the school on a temporary basis on short-term contracts and subsequently left. This has impacted negatively on pupils' ability to do well in all subjects. In some subjects, including history and geography, teaching lacks continuity and regularly changes topic and direction before being completed. This has resulted in incomplete work and gaps in learning not being addressed. Pupils lack opportunities to finish tasks and build on what they already know and can do.
- A few teachers do not consistently use prior information on their pupils to plan learning that is appropriate to their needs and abilities. A minority of teachers do not use effective questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is largely due to short-term appointments as some staff are not in the school for long enough to understand the needs and abilities of their pupils. As a result, some of the work lacks challenge and there is an over-reliance on teacher support. Pupils do not develop critical thinking skills. As a result, pupils make weak progress in some subjects, including history and geography.
- Where staffing is stable, teaching is effective. English and science are taught well. The work in pupils' books shows that they have made good progress from their starting points. In science, pupils grasp new concepts and can relate them to practical examples, such as using tomato ketchup to demonstrate properties of liquids and solids. This engages pupils well and develops their curiosity. In English, the work in pupils' books shows improvement in handwriting and presentation over time. Pupils' writing skills improve over time. Pupils use technical language and more sophisticated vocabulary when writing for different purposes and audiences. Pupils use sources of information well to present balanced arguments. As a result, they write with fluency and confidence.
- In mathematics, teachers use previous information well to plan individualised learning matched to pupils' needs and abilities. This results in high levels of engagement. Pupils' misconceptions are quickly spotted by teachers, and tasks are reshaped to secure learning. This results in pupils acquiring new skills that they can apply when solving problems; for example, pupils who were previously unable to calculate the values of angles were using different strategies to complete the task successfully. As a result, pupils develop resilience and attempt tasks, which they could not previously do, with confidence.
- Staff who work consistently with the pupils have developed positive relationships. In these sessions, pupils respond quickly to teacher directions and settle quickly into learning. These teachers use humour well to motivate and engage pupils. As a result, little time is wasted, and pupils make strong progress throughout their lessons.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- During the inspection, the water posed a scalding risk to pupils. The testing of portable appliances was two months out of date. This put pupils at risk as equipment had not been tested as safe. These issues were addressed during the inspection. However, the systems to ensure that these checks were in place were insufficient.
- Supervision of pupils is effective. Staff are vigilant. Pupils are accompanied during unstructured times of the school day and all off-site visits are appropriately risk assessed and staffed accordingly.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils have a clear understanding of e-safety. They know about online risks and how to report them. They are less confident on recognising the risks of radicalisation. Leaders have clear plans in place to deliver sessions appropriate to the needs of the pupils to increase their knowledge.
- The curriculum for personal, social and health education has been recently introduced. The plans cover themes such as identity, respect for others, relationships and self-awareness.
- Careers education is delivered using a standardised package. Pupils learn about different sectors and the job roles within them and benefit also from independent advice. They investigate qualifications they may need and are supported in writing letters of application. As a result, pupils are prepared for their next phases.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The behaviour policy is understood by all pupils and implemented consistently by all staff. A high number of pupils arrive at the school having displayed challenging behaviour in previous settings. Some have been permanently excluded from their previous schools and have not accessed education for long periods of time. Pupils respond well to the school's behaviour reward system. The school's information shows that incidents of negative behaviour reduce over time. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions are low.
- Although attendance for some pupils is low, for a significant number of pupils, it is improving. A high proportion of current pupils have not accessed formal education for up to two years. Leaders work well with parents to support regular attendance; they also access support from the local authority where appropriate. The school's information shows that this has been effective, resulting in increased attendance over time.
- There are high expectations of behaviour and conduct. The majority of pupils are polite and welcoming. Pupils know what is expected of them. As a result, behaviour is largely positive during lessons and during unstructured times of the school day. Pupils behave well within the community and when they are accessing alternative provision.
- Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils who met with the inspector said they were confident

that staff would resolve any bullying issues. Pupils know about the different types of bullying. The use of derogatory language is also rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement. Leaders have not ensured that pupils in all year groups are able to make consistently good progress across the curriculum. Progress throughout the curriculum, for example in history, geography, and ICT, is weak because of staff turnover. When the ICT teacher left earlier in the year, pupils were unable to continue with their work in this subject. As a result, pupils have not progressed as much as they could.
- Pupils arrive at the school at any point during the academic year. In some cases, current pupils have missed up to two years of formal education. The results of standardised tests show that attainment on entry varies greatly. Although they have gaps in their learning, most pupils arrive with similar starting points to pupils of the same age.
- Pupils' achievement varies throughout subjects. The progress they make depends on the quality and consistency of the teaching they receive. The vast majority of pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. In these subject areas, pupils benefit from continuous teaching that is well matched to their individual needs and abilities.
- Leaders have introduced more opportunities for accreditation since the last inspection. Pupils do not have long enough to complete GCSEs if they arrive late. However, the vast majority of the current cohort have achieved functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. In a few cases, pupils were able to sit examinations earlier than anticipated due to strong progress.
- The majority of pupils arrive with age-appropriate reading ages, but a small number of pupils have significantly low reading ages. Pupils read regularly and access texts relevant to their ability. Additional support for those that need it, including phonics and guided reading, helps them to catch up. As a result, the school's assessment information shows that pupils make good progress in reading from their individual starting points.
- The majority of pupils who have recently left the school moved on to college courses and apprenticeships. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said the school helped them to make plans for their future. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the future.

School details

Unique reference number	134614
DfE registration number	937/6104
Inspection number	10047132

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

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Wathen Grange School
Chair	Viron Mangat
Headteacher	Robert Maddox (acting)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,930
Telephone number	01827 714454
Website	www.wathengrange.com
Email address	v.mangat@wathengrange.com
Date of previous inspection	26–28 April 2016

Information about this school

- Wathen Grange School is a day school for up to 20 boys and girls with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils who are admitted to the school have typically experienced disruption to their formal education. Many of them have had periods of prolonged absence from education prior to joining the school. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- There are currently 10 pupils on roll. Currently, a small number of pupils access part-time timetables.
- The school was inspected in April 2016 when it was judged to be inadequate with a

number of unmet regulations. The school submitted an action plan outlining how it would address these. A subsequent monitoring visit took place in January 2017 to check on implementation of the action plan. All standards were met.

- Since the last inspection, the proprietorial body has changed its name from Complete Care (Warks) to Wathen Grange School.
- There have been a number of key staff changes since the last inspection. The headteacher left the school, along with a number of teaching staff. The school has been led and managed largely by the acting headteacher since September 2016. There have been challenges in recruiting and retaining teaching staff.
- Pupils are referred to the school from a number of local authorities, including Warwickshire, Coventry, Manchester and Leicester.
- The school uses one alternative provider called The Waterfront Project in Leicester. Pupils are able to access a range of sporting and educational activities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector met with the acting headteacher, who is also the SENCo. Meetings were also held with the inclusion manager, teaching staff, pupils and the proprietor.
- The inspector toured the premises accompanied by the acting headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils. The views of a small number of parents collated by the school were considered along with one response to Parent view. The inspector also took account of six responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed teaching in all year groups and in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, food technology and geography. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher.
- The inspector also observed the behaviour of pupils during unstructured times of the school day, including at breakfast club, and during lunchtime and breaktimes.
- The inspector reviewed the work in pupils' books across a range of subjects and year groups and scrutinised the school's assessment information. Associated schemes of work and plans were also reviewed.
- A number of key policies were examined, including safeguarding, behaviour, admissions, attendance, anti-bullying and the curriculum.
- The checks made on staff's suitability to work with children were evaluated.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are:
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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