

# Grange School

Matthews Lane, Longsight, Manchester, M12 4GR

## Inspection dates

14–15 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The school has not had time to adapt all its systems and procedures to match its new identity and location.
- The responsibilities of leaders and managers do not correspond closely enough to the increased size of the school and broader range of pupils' needs. This is equally true for the sixth form which also requires improvement.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently strong enough to enable all pupils to make at least good progress. Not all teachers use the targets set for pupils effectively to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging.
- Information about pupils' learning is not always used precisely enough to plan lessons that help pupils take the next small steps in their learning. This slows their progress.
- There is not enough continuity in the way the curriculum is planned to promote pupils' progress well as they move through the school.
- There has not been enough time for the governing body to demonstrate good leadership in the school's new situation. However, governors have established firm foundations and procedures for the effective governance of the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff pay a great deal of attention to ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. They manage pupils' behaviour effectively so that interruptions to learning are minimised.
- The strong focus on developing pupils' communication and social skills contributes well to their learning and personal development.
- Some teaching is good.
- The new headteacher has a clear vision for the school as a unified institution and as the local authority's hub for autism. He has quickly gained a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this is providing a firm foundation for planning for improvement.
- Systems to hold teachers to account for pupils' learning have been strengthened.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 17 lessons taught by 16 staff and were joined in four observations by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They visited the school café, which provides a service to the school and community as well as a training opportunity for older students.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the school council, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. They attended a meeting of the parents’ support group.
- In coming to their conclusions, inspectors took into account the views of eight parents who completed the online Parent View questionnaire, a letter from a parent, a conversation with a grandparent and responses from 27 staff who returned an inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of evidence from the school’s behaviour and incident logs as well as information about how well pupils attend. They took the school’s policies and procedures into consideration.

## Inspection team

Jane Austin, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Grange School educates pupils with autism spectrum conditions and communication difficulties. It is larger than many special schools and has considerably more boys than girls on roll. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and six are looked after by the local authority.
- While the biggest single group of pupils is White British, more than half come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. English is an additional language for about a third of the pupils.
- The proportion of pupils whose circumstances are known to make the school eligible for the government's additional funding through the pupil premium is high.
- During the last academic year the school moved into a new building, bringing its provision together on a new, single site. About 30 pupils and some staff from another special school, which was closed by the local authority, became part of Grange School in its new location. Consequently, the school has almost doubled in size in the past year and the range of pupils' disabilities and special educational needs has extended.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2012, following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
    - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
    - ensuring that teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn in every lesson and plan interesting activities that meet these objectives
    - developing teachers' skills in assessing pupils' small steps in learning
    - targeting adult support more precisely for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
    - increasing pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning.
  - Increase the rate of pupils' progress by:
    - providing training and support for staff to establish a common understanding of the link between pupils' targets and their day-to-day learning
    - ensuring that all targets for pupils' learning are sufficiently challenging and that their progress towards them is recorded systematically
    - increasing the continuity in curriculum planning better to support pupils' learning as they move through the school.
  - Improve the coherence and consistency of leadership and management by:
    - updating all policies and systems to match the school's new location and the needs of all the pupils
    - developing a management structure that better matches the increased size of the school and the wider range of pupils' needs.
    - ensuring that the recently established governance procedures have the desired impact on leadership, teaching and learning.
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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

#### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement fluctuates during their time in school. Their progress is good in those classes where expectations are high and challenging targets are used effectively to guide learning. It requires improvement where assessment is weaker and teachers are less secure about the next small steps in learning that pupils need to take. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for post-16 students is also variable and similarly reflects the quality of teaching.
- The school sets appropriate targets for pupils' learning, but systems for regularly tracking their progress towards these vary for different age groups and cohorts. This hampers the ability of senior leaders and staff to identify issues and intervene quickly when progress slows. At times it has the effect of reducing the level of challenge for pupils.
- Assessment is more secure for older pupils who are following courses which lead to Asdan awards. The progress students make in developing a range of skills is carefully logged.
- The school's analysis shows that there are no trends or significant variations in the performance of groups of pupils. However, there have been changes in the level and type of need of some pupils now in the school so, helpfully, the pupil premium funding is being used to provide additional support for this group.

### The quality of teaching

#### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is uneven across the school. Common strengths of lessons are the very positive relationships between adults and pupils as well as the effective way in which pupils' behaviour is managed. A common weakness is the lack of opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning.
- Where teaching requires improvement, lesson planning is often weak. It focuses on what pupils will do in a lesson rather than on what they will learn. The activities are not closely enough matched to the needs of individuals and this hinders their progress. This is because not all teachers assess the small stages in pupils' learning precisely enough.
- When lessons are not well organised, the pace is pedestrian and opportunities to foster pupils' independence are missed. This is sometimes because teaching assistants are not directed clearly enough in how to support pupils' learning. Tasks are lacklustre and not all resources are appropriate for the age of the pupils.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage adult support for activities which children choose is not sufficiently focused on the precise learning needs of each child.
- Where teaching is at least good, questioning is carefully targeted on developing the understanding of individual pupils. The relevant language is modelled well and there are a variety of opportunities for purposeful repetition.
- In these better lessons teachers carefully select stimulating resources which reflect pupils' interests. For example, a group of Year 11 boys were thoroughly engaged in speaking, listening and writing based on books and film clips about zombies.
- Practical tasks successfully capture pupils' enthusiasm. This was evident in a Key Stage 3 science lesson in which pupils successfully conducted their own experiment on melting and refreezing ice.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

#### requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour is managed effectively in lessons and around the school so that learning can proceed with few interruptions. Staff know the pupils very well and are skilled in using strategies that work for individuals when difficulties arise.
- Staff are fully alert to pupils' behaviours and ensure that they are safe. The school building has a

range of in-built security systems which help in managing pupils' safe movement around the site.

- Members of the new school council, formed this term, say they feel safe in school and are able to share any concerns with staff. They are clear about improvements they would like to see, particularly increased access to ICT.
- The thoroughgoing emphasis on developing communication, using a range of methods appropriate to pupils, supports the maintenance of a calm atmosphere. Opportunities for time out and reflection, as well as consistent routines, help pupils to manage their own behaviour.
- Although managing behaviour and keeping pupils safe are effective on a daily basis, the policies for these areas are under review because they do not match the school's new situation fully. For this reason, this area of the school's work requires improvement.
- The system for recording incidents is used consistently and the headteacher has introduced a weekly analysis in order to identify trends. There are helpful plans to update this system from manual to electronic in order to make the information readily accessible so it can be used to inform strategic decisions.
- Attendance is average and no pupil is persistently absent.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The headteacher is determined that the school will become a unified institution with a distinct role in the local authority's provision for autism. He has introduced a system for regular checks on the quality of the school's work and quickly gained a realistic overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Priorities for development have been identified and planning for these is underway.
- The headteacher has taken swift action to begin the review of many policies, procedures and structures, in the light of the school's new situation, in order to establish much needed coherence and consistency. He recognises that, now the school is larger, leadership and management responsibilities need to be distributed more widely: plans for this are in hand.
- During the last academic year, with the support of the local authority, the school identified that teaching required improvement and began to address this. This term the issue is being tackled with some urgency. Through a partnership with a local teaching school, support and training are in place.
- The headteacher has introduced a more rigorous approach to teachers' performance management, linked closely to the Teachers' Standards. Alongside this, teachers are beginning to be held more accountable for pupils' outcomes.
- The curriculum is planned appropriately, but separately, for primary and secondary pupils. Given the school's new situation, a more coherent approach is required to smooth transition from the primary to the secondary phase.
- There are some particular strengths in the curriculum. Sex and relationships education for secondary pupils makes a positive contribution to their personal development. The same is true of the opportunities provided for residential, outdoor education trips. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through activities as wide-ranging as links with the Halle orchestra and use of the sensory garden.
- There are good opportunities for the oldest pupils to become more independent in preparation for the next stage of their lives, including through following accredited courses. The school's café provides a high-quality facility where pupils gain a range of skills linked to food service and hospitality.
- The headteacher is involving families more in school life through social events such as the recent fun day and opportunity to use the soft play facility. This complements the regular meetings of the siblings group and the parents' support group.
- The school's systems to keep pupils safe and check on staff qualifications and access to pupils meet the government's requirements.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has been strengthened since the previous inspection, with wider representation from the autism community in Manchester, as well as the local community in which the new building is situated. It has restructured its procedures to meet the demands of the school's larger size and new identity. Governors bring a range of pertinent expertise to their roles, enabling them to seek out relevant information and provide an appropriate level of challenge to the school's leaders. Led by the Chair of the Governing Body, governors are developing the skills to monitor the school's performance. Through learning walks and links with individual classes, they are gaining a first-hand view of the quality of teaching. Governors are aware that, in the past, staff career progression has not been linked closely to performance management. They are working with the headteacher to introduce a more rigorous system.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105622
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	400789

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	156
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	17
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Laura Rhodes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Keith Cox
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 231 2590
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 231 2417
<b>Email address</b>	head@grange.manchester.sch.uk



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