

Beacon Hill School

Stone Lodge Lane West, Ipswich, IP2 9HW

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have failed to tackle breaches of mandatory safeguarding requirements. Issues at the time of the inspection meant that the school could not ensure that pupils were safe.
- Leaders rely too heavily on the local authority and governing body to improve teaching, pupils' achievement, and leadership and management.
- They do not consistently analyse and interpret data accurately enough to bring about rapid improvement in achievement across the school.
- Teaching requires improvement as it is not ensuring that enough pupils are making consistently good progress across the whole school, especially in Key Stage 3 and in English in Key Stage 4.
- Teachers do not reinforce learning frequently enough to make sure pupils retain what they have learnt.
- Not all teachers make skilful use of the information they have on pupils' progress to plan lesson activities at the right level of difficulty.
- Teachers do not consistently assess and record pupils' progress accurately enough, and this is holding back school improvement.
- Subject leaders are insufficiently skilled to check up on the quality of teaching in their own subjects and areas of responsibility to discover what needs improving.
- Some pupils do not attend regularly enough to make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement in Key Stage 2 is good, and the teaching of reading and writing engages pupils successfully in learning.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school.
- The new governing body actively supports and challenges the school's leaders.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a total of 12 lessons, several of which were joint observations carried out with the headteacher.
- The inspectors heard individual pupils reading. They also observed lessons on reading and phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Discussions were held with school leaders, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a group of pupils. The inspectors also had two meetings with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors examined a range of school documentation covering safeguarding, examples of minutes from governors' meetings, the management of staff performance, records of behaviour and safety, attendance, checks on pupils' attainment and progress, and school improvement planning.
- The inspectors took account of the 14 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), a recent school survey of parental views and the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Ron Hall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Cox	Additional Inspector
Joanna Jones	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, 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

- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs, either for moderate or severe learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the Pupil Premium is well above average. This extra government funding supports certain groups of pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average as is the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- A number of Year 11 students attend part-time courses at Suffolk New College and Otley College.
- At the time of the inspection there were no Key Stage 1 pupils in the school.
- There is a specially resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs on the school site, but this is not run by the governing body and was not included in the inspection.
- The current governing body was formed a year ago, following the local authority's removal of the previous governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the quality of teaching consistently good so pupils make better progress, particularly in Key Stage 3 and in English, by:
 - improving teachers' subject-specific knowledge and skills, particularly in English
 - making sure that teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to reinforce their learning and so are able to retain what they have learnt
 - keeping pupils actively involved in learning throughout each lesson
 - giving all staff the training they need to use accurate assessment information effectively in planning lesson activities that challenge pupils at the right level of difficulty
 - making sure that all pupils know and understand what they are capable of achieving in English and mathematics.
- Improve how the school is led and managed by making sure that:
 - the leadership and management of safeguarding are rigorous, all required policies and procedures are fully up to date, and all staff are fully trained in safeguarding procedures
 - capacity for future improvement is secured by strengthening the procedures for accountability
 - all leaders can carry out lesson observations effectively and accurately, and can analyse and interpret data on pupils' progress to identify areas for improvement
 - further training is provided to allow leaders to carry out their roles effectively.
- Work closely with parents and carers to make sure that all pupils attend regularly and to reduce the need for temporary exclusions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils start at the school with very low attainment because of their moderate or severe learning difficulties.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress, but many in Key Stage 3 and a few in Key Stage 4 do not achieve enough. In Key Stage 3, progress in both English and mathematics is not improving rapidly enough to overcome previous underachievement. Progress in mathematics in Key Stage 4 is good, but in English it requires improvement.
- Although teaching seen during the inspection was good and pupils made good progress in lessons, pupils are not able to retain what they learn because teachers do not provide enough reinforcement of learning to allow them to do so. Teachers do not consistently or accurately monitor and record the progress of their pupils. This in turn means that they are not using accurate information to plan their lessons and make sure that they are pitched at the right level.
- Teaching and achievement in mathematics have improved generally across the school as a result of the support provided by the local authority. Progress in the earlier years in the subject is good for all pupils, but this is not yet the case in Key Stage 3. Similarly, progress in English is good in Key Stage 2, but the support provided by the local authority has not yet had a full effect further up the school.
- Pupils' literacy and communication skills are not well developed when they join the school, but they make steady progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing through regular guidance and one-to-one support.
- The school's records and inspectors' observations show that there is little difference in the attainment and academic progress shown by the different groups within the school, such as girls and boys. However, pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium make variable progress. Some make progress in line with their classmates, but by the time they leave the school, a few of these pupils are six to 12 months behind their peers in English and mathematics. The school carefully tracks the progress made by the few students on part-time college courses, who generally do well.
- The school uses the Pupil Premium money to support families, to help develop pupils' personal and social skills, and to give them a wider experience of life, such as through college programmes. The adults who support learning in school also make a good contribution to boosting pupils' self-esteem and confidence. This means that they are better able to communicate their feelings and ideas, and so improve their learning in the classroom.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because, although school information shows this to be good over time and good teaching was observed during the inspection, it has not enabled pupils to make fast enough progress. This is due to teachers not providing work which reinforces what they have taught the pupils. This results in pupils not being able to retain what they learn in lessons.
- Although the standards set for teachers nationally are being met and mathematics has improved across the school, a few staff still lack some subject knowledge. The teaching of English is

weaker than in other subjects across the school, and especially in the upper school.

- A few teachers do not use assessment information well to pitch lesson activities at the right level for all the pupils. As a result, tasks are too easy for some and too difficult for others. The progress they make in these lessons is too slow.
- A small number of teachers do not consistently assess their pupils' work effectively, or record their progress accurately or often enough. This leads to inaccurate information on which teachers base future planning and the senior leadership team bases its targets for improvement.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers provide a suitable structure and level of challenge for pupils of different abilities. In Key Stage 2, pupils are grouped by ability in three mixed-aged classes. This has been a key factor in these pupils' good progress as it allows the needs of every individual to be fully met.
- The other adults who support learning generally provide effective, confident support in the classroom and bring a wide range of skills to their work. They work willingly and enthusiastically, constantly encouraging pupils to reach for their targets and to behave properly.
- The school makes increasingly effective use of individual targets in numeracy in order to improve pupils' basic skills. In literacy these skills are not so well developed in Key Stages 3 and 4. However, good links across different subjects are allowing pupils to learn more quickly across the whole range of subjects taught. Too few pupils know what their targets are when asked, and do not know what they specifically have to do to move on.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- Inadequacies in the safeguarding arrangements mean that the pupils' safety is not ensured by the school.
- Behaviour during the inspection was good overall, but behaviour management systems are not applied consistently across the school or for all individuals. Pupils commented to inspectors that there were issues at times with behaviour and this sometimes interrupted their lessons. Inspectors noted that some staff just sent pupils to 'go for a walk' with an adult, rather than trying to keep them in the classrooms.
- In a small number of lessons, boredom and some minor behavioural issues set in when pupils have to sit and listen for too long before they can become actively engaged in learning.
- Parents and carers are positive about behaviour in school, but a number of staff raised concerns about behaviour in school generally.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and their learning in general are positive, particularly in Key Stage 2. Staff encourage and support good behaviour and a willingness to learn. Older pupils around the school also demonstrate good behaviour and support younger ones when needed.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 understand and value the reward system that is used to help them know how well they are behaving. They are clear that they will not get a reward if their behaviour is not good. Pupils who live in difficult circumstances are cared for very well at the school.
- Although school data show that attendance is improving, it is still below average. The main

group with low attendance is those supported by Pupil Premium funding. Some attend more regularly, but there are still too many with poor attendance. The school recognises that it needs to work more closely with parents and carers to improve attendance and reduce temporary exclusions, which have fluctuated since the last inspection but are still too frequent.

- Pupils say that some instances of bullying occur, but these are generally dealt with effectively by teachers. They have a basic understanding of the different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying, but do not really understand how to stay safe on the internet.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The current leadership and management of safeguarding are inadequate and this has led to serious breaches of mandatory requirements, as well as putting both pupils and staff at risk.
- The headteacher and other members of the school leadership team are relatively inexperienced and have found it difficult to improve the school and raise standards. They have had a number of staffing issues to deal with, which have acted as barriers to learning and slowed school improvement.
- Senior staff and subject leaders have not had enough training to allow them to take full responsibility for improving the areas for which they are responsible. This has resulted in too much dependency on the local authority and governing body to help move the school forward.
- Although the school's senior leaders have provided teachers with support in developing their skills through the local authority advisory service, some teachers have been resistant to change and this has also slowed improvements in the school.
- Subject leaders and managers do not have the skills to check the quality of teachers' work carefully enough to make sure that teaching is good for all pupils. The systems for managing staff performance are relatively new and so have not led to marked improvements. However, the governing body and headteacher are beginning to hold staff to account more systematically.
- The headteacher's and other senior leaders' views of the school's effectiveness are based on inaccurate data and confusing information. As a result, their evaluation of how well the school is performing is too generous. Senior leaders have been slow to deal with the weaknesses identified through their monitoring and in reports by the local authority and the governing body. They have not shown that they have the capacity to improve the school further.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, personal, social and moral education well and has made an effective contribution to promoting positive behaviour. There has been a positive focus on developing an awareness of the wider community and building the school's own community.
- The local authority has a very good awareness of the school's performance and has provided significant support and challenge through, for example, the school improvement officer for some considerable time. It has provided specialist support to develop areas of expertise, such as in mathematics, and is continuing to provide support for English. While this support and challenge has slowed the school's decline, importantly it has not managed to increase its capacity and so prevent it from becoming inadequate.
- The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is beginning to engage the pupils more, but once again this change has been brought about through support by the local

authority.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has developed well under the leadership of a new Chair. Governors have spent a great deal of time in the school, getting to know staff and pupils, and have systematically learnt about all aspects of their role. The local authority brought in a wide range of skills and expertise. Governors have organised themselves very efficiently and monitor all aspects of the school. This has given them the knowledge to ask searching questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, including the impact of how Pupil Premium money is being used. They make sure that decisions about pay and promotion are now closely linked to teachers' performance and pupils' improved rates of progress. They know how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance rigorously.
- Since taking up their role, the governors have started to hold the headteacher and other staff to account as well as providing support. They have provided strategic leadership through helping create the school development plan, and have laid down tight but realistic timescales for improvements. It was the governing body, working alongside the local authority, that instigated a review into safeguarding and both have raised concerns over the lack of pace in rectifying omissions. They have dealt with a number of staffing issues, resulting in several changes of senior leaders and teachers as well as other staff.

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	124908
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	425182

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Morcom
Headteacher	Carolyn Davis
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2011
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