

Mount Gilbert School

Hinkshay Road, Dawley, Telford, TF4 3PP

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
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

- Leaders, managers and governors have not been effective in making sure that teaching and students' progress improve. As a result, standards have deteriorated since the last inspection.
- Students' achievement in English and mathematics is inadequate. Too many failed to gain their predicted grades last year and students are not making the progress they should.
- Funding to support disadvantaged students and additional funding to help Year 7 pupils to catch up has not been used well enough to help students improve their skills.
- The range of subjects taught does not secure students' interest or challenge them enough. This contributes to the poor attendance of many of the students.
- Staff raised concerns about safety in school. There have been a high number of incidents of assaults by students and damage to school property. Poor behaviour is not managed well and often disrupts learning.
- Teachers do not make sure that students improve their skills rapidly enough or check on how well they are doing.
- The marking of students' work varies in quality and does not help students know what they have to do to improve.
- Plans to improve the school are not well focused on bringing about improvements because senior leaders and the local authority do not have an accurate picture of the school.
- Subject leaders are not checking on the progress and work of students and ensuring that teaching within their subjects is of high quality.
- Governors have not held the school sufficiently to account for weaknesses in progress or ensured that the school is safe and well run.
- The school does not have strong enough understanding of the quality of work that is provided to students when they attend courses off-site.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not well promoted.

The school has the following strengths

- Students clearly enjoy practical subjects and make good progress in these.
- Staff work closely with families to help them to support their children.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector saw 11 lessons or parts of lessons. All were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at: the school's records on students' progress; its development plan; records on behaviour, bullying and attendance; policies for safety and child protection; and records of governing body meetings. She also looked at students' books and talked to them about their work.
- There were insufficient responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to inform the inspection, but the school's survey of parents' views was considered.

Inspection team

Sarah Mascall, Lead inspector

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

- Mount Gilbert is a small school for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Several students have autistic spectrum disorders.
- All students have statements of special educational needs.
- Nearly all students are White British.
- There are only a very small number of girls on the roll of the school
- The proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium (the extra money provided by the government to support certain groups, such as those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils in the care of the local authority) is higher than average.
- The school also receives government funding to help Year 7 students who have fallen behind to catch up on their learning.
- The school uses three alternative providers at present. These are Nova Training, Drives and Web Centre. All are based in, or near to, the Telford area. Students attend courses run by these providers to develop their social skills and gain experience in a range of activities.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was on leave but is returning on a full-time basis at Easter. An acting headteacher has been brought in to support the school.
- The senior leadership team went through a period of change at the end of July 2013. A new deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2013 and a new assistant headteacher, responsible for assessment, started in January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that students make the progress of which they are capable, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - assess students' ongoing progress and learning so that they know how well the students are doing
 - provide work that builds well on what students already know, is not too easy or too hard for them and which they find interesting
 - mark students' work and provide written and verbal feedback to students about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve students' skills in English and mathematics by making sure that:
 - there are high expectations of what students can achieve, particularly in the progress they can make
 - subject and school leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and marking to bring about improvements in teachers' practice.
- Improve students' behaviour and attitudes by:
 - providing a better range of subjects and activities that meet students' needs and interests

more effectively so that they attend more often and take better care over their work

- ensuring that all staff have the skills to support students in their behaviour and are consistent in managing incidents of inappropriate behaviour
- establishing clear consequences for behaviour that are effective in modifying poor behaviour and reducing fixed-term exclusions
- strengthening the rewards system further, and its use by staff, so that students are more aware of the advantages of good behaviour
- ensuring that the new systems for addressing poor attendance have a positive impact on getting students into school and reducing absence.

■ Improve leadership and management and governance so that they are effective in bringing about improvements at a rapid pace by ensuring that:

- checks on the quality of teaching and progress are far more rigorous so that areas for development are identified and tackled quickly
- the school's plan for improvement identifies the right priorities and sets clear, measurable targets and timelines for improvement
- procedures for tracking the progress of students are comprehensive and are used to hold staff to account for students' progress where it is not good enough
- subject leaders have a clear understanding of the progress of students and the strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects
- governors set school leaders clear targets for improvement and are rigorous in checking that these have been achieved
- checks on the spending of pupil premium funding from the government, and the Year 7 'catch up' funding, are rigorous and that the way funds are used has a positive impact on students' learning.

■ Establish more rigorous systems for checking how well students are achieving and how safe they are when they attend off-site courses.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils start school with low attainment because many have had a very disrupted education and have not previously attended school regularly.
- The school's recent analysis of students' achievements clearly identifies weaknesses in achievement. Last year, a number of Year 11 students failed to achieve the results predicted by teachers, particularly in English and mathematics. In other subjects, such as science and information and communication technology, students achieved lower levels of accreditation than predicted and, in some cases, failed to achieve a pass.
- Progress for students is inadequate. In some subjects, targets have been set for students but these are not always challenging and do not take account of the different abilities of the students. In a few subjects, such as English, some students' progress last term has not been assessed and their data missing. As a result, the school does not have a clear picture of progress across the school.
- The inspection's judgements are confirmed by the school's own assessments. These identify that students are underachieving in English in Year 10 and Year 8, with no data for Year 9 and Year 7. In mathematics, students are judged to be underachieving in Year 11, Year 9 and Year 7.
- The new assessment manager does not have enough information to check on the progress of the different groups of students. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that no group is doing better than any other, including those eligible for government funding.
- The extra money provided by the government to support Year 7 pupils and those eligible for the pupil premium funding has been used to provide a number of additional support programmes, including those aimed at improving the progress of students in literacy. Groups have been established to improve students' skills through phonics (letters and the sounds they make) teaching. In these sessions, some students' skills in writing have improved and they take care over their work. However, because students do not all complete the booklets and miss some out completely, there is no systematic development of their skills. Hence, their overall progress is inadequate.
- Although staff visit students who are off-site at alternative providers, the school does not have reliable information on these students' progress and achievement.
- The poor attendance of students and the high number of days lost because of exclusions prevents students from making better progress.
- In practical subjects, such as Jamie Oliver's BTEC (British and Technology Education Council) cooking and Open College Network construction, students gain passes in accredited courses. They talk very positively about the skills they have learnt. For example, a student explained how he used masking tape to protect light switches when painting and why the roller needed to be dry when he was applying paint. In art, students who take the GCSE qualification do well and the quality of their work is very impressive.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Observations of teaching, together with evidence from students' books, indicate that teaching

and the quality of learning over time are inadequate. As a result, students are not making the progress of which they are capable.

- Students often struggle to settle to learning because the work is not interesting enough or set at the right level of difficulty. For example, in science, a student needed a lot of persuasion to participate in the lesson. When he did, he was given a worksheet which he did not have the literacy skills to read; equally, he could not write the answers without considerable support. This lack of planning to provide work at a suitable level did little for the student's self-esteem. It did not enable him to work on his own without support or show what he knew and understood.
- Typically, the work is the same for all students, regardless of their different abilities. Students, therefore, find the work either too hard or too easy. As a result, they lose interest and become disruptive. In mathematics, for example, a more-able student completed the task of dividing a line with a compass very quickly but then had to sit and wait for the others to finish. Rather than being given harder, additional work, he was given a toy to play with, but he was irritated and said he was bored.
- Little account is taken of students' previous knowledge and understanding to develop their skills. In English, for example, students were working on targeting audiences in advertising but had done similar work previously. As a result, they struggled to maintain interest. In mathematics, students had completed a worksheet to identify complex shapes, such as rhombus and cone, and had clearly achieved this successfully. In the next lesson, they were asked to identify and describe a square, circle and triangle. Hence, the work was getting easier rather than taking students to the next level of difficulty.
- Behaviour is not managed well by staff. For example, expectations that students do not wear hats and hoods in lessons are not followed through and the consequences of poor behaviour are not made clear. Swearing is not addressed by some staff and, as a result, students often use foul language in lessons. They lose interest in the work and leave class, occasionally returning, but not always. Teaching staff do not have the skills they need to manage behaviour effectively.
- The marking of work is highly variable. There is very limited advice within the school's marking policy but teachers do not always mark students' work or inform them about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. In subjects such as art and cookery, a new electronic assessment programme is being used well to show students the skills they have gained and what they need to do next. However, this has not been extended to subjects such as English, mathematics and science.
- There are examples of good teaching, particularly in the practical subjects. In physical education, for example, the good pace of learning keeps students fully engaged in learning to play sports. In a lesson on handball, students were keen to answer questions and showed they had made good progress by explaining the different throws they were using and when these should be used. The teacher constantly reinforced learning through continual reminders, congratulating students when they made the right decisions. As a result, students made good progress in their skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate. The behaviour of students is inadequate. Students reacted very negatively to the changes in staffing at the start of the autumn term. The school's systems and expectations, however, have not been strong enough in bringing students back on board. Students' aggressive and violent behaviour has not been addressed effectively and safety is inadequate as the school is not a safe place to be.

- A number of staff raised concerns in the Ofsted questionnaire. Their concerns can be summarised by one member of staff who wrote, 'The last few months have been terrible. Staff have been assaulted, and the building has been severely damaged. Support staff pick up the brunt of the debris, violence and problems created by a lack of expectation from many teachers.'
- Students say that there is quite a lot of bullying. The school's records show that incidents of bullying, having dropped in the spring and summer of 2013, shot up during the autumn term with a 101 incidents reported.
- At just 75%, attendance is well below nationally expected levels. For some students, their attendance has improved over time. The new attendance officer is beginning to get some students into school more regularly. Parents are contacted on the first day of absence and the school works closely with the education welfare officer. The attendance officer has gone to pick up students from home when they have not arrived in school. However, even for those who do arrive in school, attendance in lessons is not guaranteed and they go off site to smoke and visit the local shop.
- The school had, last year, worked to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions but these have increased considerably since September. In the autumn term, 120 days were lost by students being sent home. The school considers that this high rate will continue this term.
- Students do not have positive attitudes to learning. This is reflected in the presentation of their work, which is often poor. Students take little care in writing and work is often scrappy. Exercise books are often covered in graffiti and have pages torn out of them. There are many examples of work not completed.
- On occasions, students get on well and work together, such as working in the cookery bus to make a meal. Despite the very cramped conditions, and working with adults they did not know, they successfully cooked a meal.
- Students say that the school has helped them to improve their behaviour. However, they acknowledge that behaviour in school overall has not been good. The school has a number of reward systems linked to points gained during lessons. Teachers are not consistent, however, in using the system to reward good behaviour or in making clear the consequences of poor behaviour.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The new senior leadership team has struggled to deal with behaviour. While some new strategies have been introduced, these have not yet had an impact on bringing about improvements.
- Self-evaluation has not been reviewed to reflect the school's present situation, and improvement planning does not effectively address the weaknesses that exist. The local authority has provided some support, but it has not checked the work of the school rigorously enough. As a result, the school does not have a clear strategy that would enable the present leadership team to manage and improve the school. Senior leaders are not currently demonstrating the knowledge and skills needed for the school to improve.
- Training and support for teaching has not yet had an impact in bringing about improvements and the school leaders have not been sufficiently rigorous in addressing the weaknesses in

teaching. In joint observations, the deputy headteacher was accurate in judging the quality of learning in lessons. However, not all leaders who carried out joint lesson observations with the inspector had an accurate view of the quality and effectiveness of teaching.

- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- School leaders do not hold teachers sufficiently to account for the progress made by the pupils they teach. New systems are being established to track students' progress. These are at a very early stage but have enabled the school to draw some conclusions about students' achievement. However, not all teachers are providing information regarding students' progress and the targets they set are not based on the students' abilities.
- Subject leaders have not been effective in bringing about improvements in their subjects. They are not clear enough about the progress students make in their subjects, nor have they identified trends and patterns in progress. They do not check the quality of teaching or review students' books to assess how well students are doing. The lack of checks means that weaknesses, for example, in the teaching of phonics, have not been identified and addressed.
- Senior leaders recognise that the range of subjects being taught does not meet the needs of students. As a result students are not being adequately prepared for life when they leave school. The school is in the process of reviewing the vocational courses and subjects offered, and are considering a different way of teaching subjects. Students are given adequate information and guidance in deciding what they should do when they leave school.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate. The school has no formal analysis or evidence that this aspect is considered in any depth. Subjects such as art and home economics, as well as visits to places of interest, provide students with some understanding of different cultures. However, their self-esteem and self-knowledge improve little and they do not understand sufficiently right from wrong.
- Visits have been carried out to check on students at the alternative providers. However, these checks, along with reports from the providers, lack rigour. They do not ensure that students are making progress in developing relevant skills or are challenged enough by the work provided. There is insufficient evidence that risk assessments of the students have been undertaken and that they are taught in a safe environment.
- Staff show considerable care in supporting parents and carers in managing their children's behaviour. There is close work with a wide range of agencies and professionals to try to support individuals. However, the school's survey last year reflected that parents did not have the same level of confidence in the school as they did the previous year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school and are aware that the school's present situation is very vulnerable. There is some evidence that they question the school and they have kept themselves up to date on the work of subjects, through talks and visits to the school. However, they have not set challenging enough targets to ensure that their concerns are addressed and, consequently, they have had little impact in helping the school to tackle current issues.
 - They do not know enough about the school's performance. The governing body has not checked closely enough on the impact that the pupil premium and the Year 7 'catch up' funding have had on improving students' key skills. Governors have not ensured that the way teachers' performance is checked has led to better teaching nor that teachers' pay is closely enough linked to the effectiveness of teaching. They have little knowledge about the quality of

teaching.

- The record of checks on all adults' suitability to work with children complies with requirements and is checked regularly by the Chair of the Governing Body.

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	132122
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	431690

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	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Evans
Headteacher	Lisa Lyon
Date of previous school inspection	Tuesday, November 27, 2012
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