

Lindsworth School

Monyhull Hall Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B30 3QA

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Too few students make the progress they should, including in English and mathematics.
- The achievement of around two thirds of the students is hampered by their low attendance. Students often join the school with gaps in their learning. When they do not attend Lindsworth frequently enough, these gaps widen rather than close.
- Teaching is inadequate. Too many teachers are absent and there are unfilled posts. Some staff have low expectations of what students can achieve.
- In some lessons students are not supported effectively to behave well. Some poor behaviour is not challenged either in lessons or around the school.
- A considerable number of staff do not think the school is well led and managed.
- The headteacher does not have a realistic understanding of the school's weaknesses. He has not taken effective enough action to improve the quality of teaching.
- Governors do not have an accurate view of how well the school is performing.
- The school is in a financial crisis. There is no clear plan as to how to improve this situation.
- There is a lack of trust between the local authority and the school. This situation has hampered the school's progress.

The school has the following strengths

- At all levels of the school there are some dedicated and skilled staff who do their best for the students.
- There is some good teaching that results in some students making good progress.
- Many students try their best to improve their behaviour and to make progress with their learning.
- The headteacher has improved some aspects of the school's work at the same time as managing a reducing workforce.
- The assistant headteachers have all made some improvements in the areas for which they are responsible.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected in July 2013 and was judged to require improvement. The school received two monitoring visits from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, the second of which raised some concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised.
- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher and another with an assistant headteacher. They also observed parts of eight other lessons. During these lessons inspectors talked to students about their work and looked at their books and files. Inspectors observed break and lunchtimes, and students' movement around the school.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including the school's information about students' progress, records of senior leaders' monitoring of the work across the school, the school's analysis of behaviour and safety and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors looked at a sample of books and other work in every subject for 17 students.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and three assistant headteachers, middle leaders and other staff, the Chair of Governors, and two representatives of the local authority.
- There were no responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire Parent View.
- 52 staff (not quite half) completed Ofsted's questionnaire, and the responses were taken into account as part of the inspection evidence.
- The residential provision was inspected in July 2013 and was not re-inspected as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Sue Morris-King, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

James McNeillie

Her Majesty's 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

- Lindsworth caters for secondary-aged students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some students have additional needs such as autism, communication difficulties and learning difficulties. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The vast majority of students are boys.
- Around 95% of students are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost half the students are from minority ethnic groups.
- Around a tenth of students at any one time are in the care of the local authority.
- Students frequently join the school during the school year; many join after Year 7, sometimes as late as Year 11.
- The school uses off-site alternative provision for 12 of its students, of whom three attend their off-site provision full time. The providers used are: Sporting Edge, WMEC, Merlin Venture, Kingsbury Training, Fairbridge Programme, Jericho, TLG and Hunters Hill School.
- The school has part-time residential provision for a small number of students.
- The school has only just received Year 7 catch up funding so this has not yet been spent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement by:
 - eradicating the pockets of inadequate teaching
 - tackling staffing issues to enable students to have the maximum continuity in their learning
 - ensuring that all staff, including teaching assistants and mentors, have equally high expectations of what students can achieve and communicate these clearly in each lesson
 - helping students to develop and then use their literacy skills in every lesson, not just in English lessons
 - deciding on what is required from teachers' marking and ensuring that all teachers implement this consistently
 - making sure that students' progress is assessed regularly and consistently across all subject areas.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - ensuring that all staff have consistently high expectations of students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in every lesson, and quickly challenge poor behaviour so that it does not deteriorate
 - giving staff training and support to manage the more complex and challenging behaviours that some students present.
- Improve attendance by:

- ensuring that the attendance of all students is accurately recorded
 - improving the process for recording and reporting the attendance of students at alternative provision
 - reducing the use of part-time timetables
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all staff responsible for attendance and ensuring that these are carried out effectively.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
- the headteacher and senior and middle leaders gain a clear overview of where the strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie and take action accordingly
 - every member of staff's roles and responsibilities are clear and the effectiveness with which they carry these out are properly monitored
 - all the actions that are being taken to improve the school's work are properly evaluated to assess their impact and the evaluation is used to plan the next steps
 - governors take full account of this evaluation and use it to provide an appropriate level of challenge as well as support
 - the school and the local authority work closely together to plan how to manage the change in numbers on roll and the related budget deficit efficiently and effectively, in particular so the school is appropriately staffed to enable students to make progress.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on 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.

The school must not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate in both key stages and across subject areas. This applies to all groups of students, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium and different ethnic groups.
- Too few students make the progress they should during their time at the school, including in English and mathematics. The achievement of around two thirds of the students is hampered, sometimes severely, by their low attendance. Students often arrive at the school with gaps in their learning, for example because they have previously missed school through exclusion or absence. When they do not attend Lindsworth frequently enough, these gaps widen rather than close. Some students' behaviour and attitudes to learning also hold them back.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is very low. Only a third of last year's Year 11 students gained any GCSE qualifications. These students gained a GCSE in English and mathematics at grades D to G. Two also gained a GCSE in art, two in English language and two in science. Only one student gained five GCSEs.
- The picture in Key Stage 4 this year is looking better than last year's. Students are being entered for more examinations. Around two thirds of Year 11 students are taking at least one GCSE, with a quarter being on track to gain five or more at grades D to G. Some Year 11 students already have a grade in English, mathematics or both and are on track to improve their grades this year. Too many students, however, particularly those who attend off-site alternative provision, are still not taking any GCSEs.
- Students' progress at Key Stage 3 in English and mathematics is starting to improve slowly. Achievement is inadequate in both these subjects, but the school's assessment information and the work in students' books suggests that more students are starting to make progress at nationally expected rates.
- The school does not know enough about students' achievement in other subject areas. Teachers are assessing students' progress but this information is not evaluated by middle or senior leaders to come to a judgement on how good progress is in each subject.
- Around a tenth of the students are on reduced timetables so they only attend school part time. This adversely affects their achievement.
- Students with low literacy levels do not make the progress they need to in order to do well in their other subjects.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Staff absence, unfilled teaching posts and some inadequate teaching result in an unsatisfactory experience for students, which adversely affects their learning.
- A scrutiny of students' books showed a wide variation in the quality of teaching that they receive over a week, and the expectation that teachers have of them. Almost all students had at least some books that were untidily presented, sometimes with torn covers and graffiti. These books contained only small amounts of work. In contrast, many of the same students had books

showing good volumes of work, presented with pride, and of much better quality.

- The books reflect the teaching seen during the inspection. Sometimes students were observed being allowed to sit where they wanted, disrupt others, and complete little work.
- In contrast, some teachers have high expectations and in these classes students rise to the challenges of producing good quality work and passing examinations. In a well-taught science lesson, Year 10 students carried out a number of experiments about exothermic and endothermic reactions, sensibly using chemicals and accurately recording their findings. In a highly engaging Year 8 citizenship lesson, students developed an excellent understanding of the reasons for and consequences of recent political conflicts. Their enthusiasm and respectful attitudes to each other and the adults in the room made a significantly positive impact on the quality of their learning.
- The good teaching and expertise is not being shared systematically or widely enough.
- The work of teaching assistants is too variable. Some teaching assistants focus very well on learning, sitting with students, helping and encouraging them and explaining and correcting work. Others stand like bodyguards at the sides of room and are seldom involved in learning. Teachers do not always manage the work of the teaching assistants well enough.
- Assessment is not good enough or consistent enough to enable middle or senior leaders to know how well students are progressing in different subjects or to ensure that the work students are given is at the right level.
- Marking is not used consistently to encourage students and help them to improve their work. There is a marking policy but not everyone follows it. Some books are sparsely or seldom marked. The best marking is very good – informative, precise and encouraging.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. There are some emerging improvements in behaviour but these are fragile. They are undermined by the high staff absence and the frequent use of temporary staff who do not know the students or how to manage their behaviour.
- In a few lessons observed during the inspection, behaviour was poor. Students were openly defiant and at times abusive to each other and to staff. Teachers sometimes tolerated poor behaviour for much too long without challenging it or asking for support.
- A number of staff commented that, although they are confident with typical behaviour management techniques, they feel that they need more training and support to manage the more complex and challenging behaviours that they encounter. Inspectors agree.
- Some teaching and support staff are already skilled at managing students' behaviour and on getting the best from them in lessons. This expertise is not shared systematically enough across the school.
- Many students try hard in their lessons, and interact positively and politely with staff and visitors. They respond to staff's expectations; where expectations are high, most students' behaviour tends to be at least reasonable and sometimes good.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate. A number of students openly smoke on the school site. This is not challenged consistently by the headteacher or staff, and many turn a blind eye or even allow students to smoke in front of them. There is no effective strategy to help students to give up or become less reliant on smoking.
- During the inspection, students generally moved sensibly around the school site. Break and lunchtimes were largely calm. Incidents that did occur were dealt with quickly.
- The use of fixed-term exclusion has been very high in the recent past. Although the number of exclusions is still high, they have started to fall this term. The use of restrictive physical intervention has also been high, but again has fallen this term.
- Behaviour is monitored and tracked thoroughly. The senior leader in charge of this aspect uses the information well to plan where action needs to be taken to support staff or students.
- Attendance is low. It appears to be rising but there are some inaccuracies in the way attendance is being recorded. The procedures for recording and following the attendance of students at off-site alternative provision are not good enough.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The headteacher does not have a realistic understanding of the school's weaknesses and has not set a clear enough strategic direction for the school. He has improved some aspects of the provision at the same time as managing a reducing workforce. However, he has not taken effective enough action to improve the quality of teaching.
- Evaluation is weak. Senior leaders monitor the quality of various aspects of the school's work, for example students' progress and behaviour. However, this information is not brought together and used to decide how effective actions have been or what needs to happen next.
- The school does not evaluate the impact of the pupil premium funding effectively.
- The senior leaders are over-stretched. They are working hard to fulfil their responsibilities, and have made improvements in the areas for which they are responsible. For example, they have improved the way in which behaviour is recorded and analysed, the tracking of students' progress, and aspects of teaching. However, they do not have strong middle leadership beneath them, which means that they cannot delegate enough.
- The school has some good partnerships with other agencies, particularly the police and the youth offending service.
- There is a lack of trust between the local authority and the school. The headteacher and some of the governors blame the local authority for this issue, and the local authority think the school is responsible. This situation has hampered the school's progress.
- The headteacher and governors have not planned how to manage the reduction in the school's roll and the resulting fall in budget. This means that the projected budget deficit is very high indeed. The local authority has provided some support for this issue but has not ensured that sensible plans are being made.
- A National Leader of Education has provided valuable support to the school.

- The site is difficult to supervise and is in a poor state of repair. Until now, some doors have been locked meaning that students were not able to leave certain buildings. The lock system was being changed during the inspection to remedy this issue.
- Recently ten students were taken off the school's roll and not placed anywhere by the local authority. This is a serious safeguarding issue.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are a mixed group. Some governors, particularly the newer ones, know that the work of the school is not currently good enough, and have been appropriately challenging as well as supportive. Others see the school's problems as the fault of the local authority or as a result of the complex students it takes. Overall, this leads to insufficient challenge and too many excuses being made for the school's performance. Governors do not use the information they receive from the school well enough to know how successfully the school is performing or to provide the right level of support and challenge. They do not know enough about how well teachers are performing, the outcomes for students or the impact of the pupil premium funding. Several governors, and particularly the Chair, have worked hard to provide practical support. For example, they were heavily involved in supporting the redundancy process in the recent past.

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	103632
Social care unique reference number	SC017171
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	444467

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	155
Number of boarders on roll	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Best
Headteacher	David McMahon
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2013
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