

# St Luke's School

Cricklade Road, Swindon, SN2 7AS

**Inspection dates** 6–7 February 2014

<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		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not enough students make good progress throughout the school because not enough teaching is good or better.
- Work is not always set at the right level of difficulty for students, and is too easy for some and too hard for others.
- There are too few opportunities for students to investigate and solve problems in mathematics, or to write at length in English and other subjects.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are sometimes too quick to provide help for students in lessons.
- Marking and the use of targets do not always show students how to improve their work and reach the higher levels.
- Behaviour requires improvement because sometimes students lose interest in learning and do not try hard enough.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not rigorous enough to ensure teaching is consistently good.
- School plans and targets for improvement do not focus sharply enough on the progress students are expected to make from their starting points.
- Over time, the governing body has not ensured that the school is held fully to account or checked carefully enough the use of additional funding to see if it is improving students' achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher has quickly identified what requires improvement and is using this to improve teaching and students' achievement.
- Students say that they 'want to come to school now,' and attendance is improving.
- Students can gain a wider range of qualifications, including at GCSE, matched to their levels of ability.
- Students' participation in a wide range of physical exercise is good.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with a range of students, the headteacher and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. Telephone discussions were held with three parents.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Discussions were held with a small number of parents over the telephone.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's data about students' current progress. In addition, the inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence, including wall displays, the school's website and evidence on the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

## Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- All students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Increasing numbers of students have autistic spectrum disorder.
- Many students have significant gaps in their education caused by long-term absence prior to starting the school. Students enter at various starting points across Key Stage 3 and 4.
- The majority of students are White British boys.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible free school meals, those in local authority care and children from service families. This figure may vary year on year because of the varied starting points of students.
- The school uses a range of work placements, including in Swindon College and local businesses, as alternative provision to support students in Key Stage 4.
- An interim headteacher was appointed in November 2013. There has been significant staff turnover and long-term staff absence since the previous inspection.

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

- Improving the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring that:
  - teachers set work at the right level of difficulty to ensure all students, especially the more able, make the best progress possible
  - targets and marking are consistently used appropriately in all lessons so that all students understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work, so that they make rapid gains in their learning
  - support from additional adults is timely and allows students time to find things out for themselves so that they learn well
  - teaching engages and motivates students so that they always sustain good behaviour in lessons and do not lose focus.
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- Increase the rate of students' progress in writing and mathematics by:
  - providing more opportunities for student to use their mathematical skills to solve problems in mathematics lessons and during work in other subjects
  - making sure that students have regular, planned opportunities to practise writing at length, in all subjects, to develop their knowledge and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling
  - using questioning more effectively to check students can understand and interpret what words mean when reading.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the school improvement plan sets ambitious, realistic targets for all students based on their starting points and national expectations of attainment and progress so that governors and senior leaders can make certain that all students, especially the more able, are achieving well
  - making sure that checks on the quality of teaching and learning are fully focused on how well

- students learn and are rigorous enough to identify weaknesses and resolve them quickly.
- providing more frequent opportunities for those responsible for different age groups or subjects to check on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of work to ensure progress for all students is consistently good or outstanding
  - making sure that the governing body uses information about how well the school is doing more effectively, so that governors can challenge the school's performance to ensure all students achieve well.

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

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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The progress that students make from low starting points is uneven and varies for different groups of students because the quality of teaching is inconsistent across subjects and year groups.
- In 2013, although students gained qualifications across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, and some at GCSE A\* to G grades, many did not reach the levels expected of them.
- Recent improvements to the quality of teaching show that rates of progress are accelerating in both English and in mathematics. School records confirm that an increasing number of students are on track to reach grades at GCSE and levels in national qualifications appropriate to their starting points. No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Students' progress in numeracy is not fast enough because there are not enough opportunities for students to use and apply their skills across all subjects to solve problems to ensure they achieve well. However, recent improvements to the curriculum and to the way mathematics is taught are speeding up progress across the school.
- Students do not make consistently good progress in writing because they do not always get sufficient opportunities to write at length for a range of purposes and develop their understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Not enough students make fast progress in reading because adults do not always use questioning effectively to check carefully that students can understand and interpret correctly, what they are reading. Daily reading sessions are now building students' knowledge and understanding and reading is improving across the school.
- Marking does not always show students how to improve their work, and the use of individual targets to identify clearly to students what they need to learn next to reach a higher level or grade above at GCSE is not consistent across all classes.
- Students make slower progress when teachers do not set work at the right level of difficulty so that it is either too hard for the less able or too easy for the more able.
- The progress of students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is similarly as inconsistent as that of their peers. In 2013, students achieved about one and a half grade levels at GCSE behind their classmates in English, and one level behind in mathematics.
- Students on the autistic spectrum are making faster progress because specialist teaching strategies and individual programmes help to reduce their levels of anxiety.
- Participation in physical education is good because the school funds clothing and equipment to ensure all students can engage. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- In 2013, students eligible for the pupil premium funding achieved about one and a half grade levels at GCSE behind their classmates in English, and one level behind in mathematics. Currently, students supported through the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are making more rapid progress through more targeted interventions in English and mathematics and therapeutic programmes. Gaps are closing. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Senior leaders regularly check the progress of students who attend the various effective off-site settings. Currently, all students in alternative provisions are achieving equally as well as their classmates.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good to raise students' achievement rapidly.
- Where teaching is less effective, the teachers' expectations of what students know and can do are too low. As a result, activities in lessons are not always set at the right level of difficulty so that more-able students find activities too easy and finish quickly, and less-able students find it too hard, and do very little. Consequently, learning slows and students are less interested and enthusiastic in their learning.
- Sometimes both teachers and teaching assistants are too quick to intervene when a student is trying something new. This hinders students' opportunities to try things out for themselves and stops the students from learning new skills on their own.
- In mathematics, there is not enough focus on open-ended investigation and problem solving where students have to work things out for themselves. This limits their ability to reason and draw conclusions from their work.
- Students' progress in developing their skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling is not good enough because they do not have enough opportunities to write at length, for a range of purposes across all subjects.
- Teachers often miss opportunities, both in lessons and when marking books, to refer to students' individual targets and set out the next steps they need to take to reach the next level or higher grade at GCSE. As a consequence, students do not always have a clear idea about how to improve quickly.
- The teaching of reading is not consistently good. Student's ability to understand what they read is less evident, when adults begin to explore the meaning of words with them, or question them about what a piece of text might infer.
- Where teaching is most successful, teachers use questions exceptionally well to probe the understanding of all students and to extend their thinking. For instance, in an excellent Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson, students made exceptional progress in their understanding of area and perimeter because the teacher used focused questions that encouraged students to reason and think logically to solve a series of problems.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because in some lessons, students need reminders to focus on their learning, particularly when learning activities are not set at the right level of difficulty or are not interesting enough.
- In these instances, students do not concentrate well and they are less enthusiastic to learn. Consequently, this slows the pace of learning and for them and others in the class. Where teaching is good or outstanding, students remain engaged and make rapid gains.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance through the support of the education welfare officer and home support worker. More students attend school regularly now and enjoy being greeted warmly by staff. They choose a nutritious breakfast and so start the day on a positive note.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students say that they feel safe and trust staff to share any problems they may have. They have confidence that the staff will sort out any issues. They say that there are few incidents of bullying and that behaviour around the school is better. Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers and other media. There are well-developed procedures to keep students safe when they are off-site.
- Students are friendly and welcoming to visitors. They are confident in talking with adults and happy to express their views and engage in conversation on a range of topics.
- School records show that most students typically behave well around the school. This significant change has taken place over the last term as a result of the intensive individual support and the

use of specialist therapeutic staff that enables students to manage their difficulties increasingly well.

- Prior to this, too many students were exhibiting challenging behaviour, which resulted in a high level of exclusions. A more consistent way of managing behaviour and a positive approach to tackling challenging conduct have reduced exclusions.

## **The leadership and management** require improvement

- High levels of staff turnover, including at senior leadership level, have slowed the drive for improvement, and the school has not been able to sustain previous good outcomes.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders has not been rigorous enough to generate and sustain improvement so that the quality of teaching still varies across the school.
- Leadership and management responsibilities are not spread well enough throughout the school. Those in charge of subjects or age groups are not always clear about their roles and responsibilities and have not had enough opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of work to ensure that all students achieve well.
- Information on how well students are achieving is not compared to national expectations rigorously enough by all leaders. Consequently, plans for improvement and targets set for students' learning are not as challenging as they could be to make sure that more-able students reach the highest levels.
- The school has recently introduced a new system for managing staff performance. There are clear links between staff performance and pay progression. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work on the quality of teaching.
- The enthusiasm, drive, determination and resilience of the interim headteacher have contributed very well to recent school improvement. There is clear evidence that teaching is improving and the rate at which students make progress is rapidly increasing, particularly in English and mathematics. Attendance has risen and the number of exclusions has been significantly reduced. This demonstrates the school's capacity to improve
- The curriculum broadly meets the needs and abilities of students, although there are insufficient planned opportunities across subjects to develop literacy and numeracy skills. A wide range of, visits, activity days, competitive sports, residential trips and the forest school promote well students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders are making important improvements to the curriculum. The range of courses that lead to higher-level qualifications, matched to students' levels of ability, has been widened and is preparing students well for the next stage in their lives.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is being used appropriately to fund additional staff and resources to support students' learning and is helping them to catch up. However, not all students are receiving consistently good teaching.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- The local authority is providing effective support matched carefully to the needs of the school. It has enlisted a Local Leader in Education to review key aspects of school performance and has provided training to school leaders, including governors.

### ■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has been restructured and now offers increasing support and challenge to senior leaders. Members are aware that they have not challenged enough the progress information presented and how it relates to current inconsistencies in teaching. Although the governing body has supported senior leaders in using the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding to provide additional support to help students improve their skills in English and

mathematics, they have not asked challenging enough questions about how much this is improving students' progress.

- Governors know about the quality of teaching and understand how targets are set for teachers and how the school deals with any underperformance through performance management procedures. Governors ensure that salary increases are linked to teaching quality, responsibilities held and students' performance. Training records indicate that governors have taken appropriate steps through the support of the local authority to increase their expertise. The governing body makes sure that all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.



## 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>	126547
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	432067

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
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	67
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Brown
<b>Interim Headteacher</b>	Geoff Cherrill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5–6 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 705566
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