

George Hastwell School

Moor Tarn Lane, Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 3LW

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement over time is inadequate. Pupils, especially in Key Stage 3 and 4, make insufficient progress in their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills from their individual starting points.
- Teaching over time is inadequate. Expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4, are too low. The targets set for pupils' learning lack challenge.
- Learning activities do not take enough account of pupils' varying needs and abilities to ensure that they make good progress.
- Teaching assistants do not always demonstrate the necessary skills to support pupils of varying abilities to help them learn effectively.
- Teaching, especially in Key Stage 3 and 4, does not interest pupils enough; it lacks relevance to their particular needs. Consequently, some pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour require improvement.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Work given to students does not always match their levels of ability or ensure sufficient challenge.
- Leaders and teachers fail to ensure that the achievement of groups of pupils, including the most able, or those supported by the pupil premium, is adequately tracked over time.
- Since the last inspection, the school's effectiveness has declined significantly and is now inadequate. Leadership and management, including governance, do not have the ability to improve the school quickly enough.
- Senior leaders have an inaccurate and overgenerous view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They do not check sufficiently that the quality of teaching and the achievement of all pupils are good enough.
- Governors do not have sufficient knowledge or skills to hold senior leaders to account for the achievement of all pupil groups.

The school has the following strengths

- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils are known as individuals and are well cared for, feel safe and trust the committed staff.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and their attendance is above average.
- New staff and those new to their roles are beginning to make positive changes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons, one of which was observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from different year groups reading, and talked with pupils about their learning and school life. Pupils' workbooks and files in all key stages were scrutinised to evaluate their progress over time.
- Meetings were held with an educational psychologist working in partnership with the school, the headteacher and senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including safeguarding arrangements.
- There were insufficient responses via the online questionnaire, Parent View, to gain a reliable summary of parents' opinions of the school. However, an inspector met with a parent and a recent survey of parents' views gathered by the school was analysed to gather their opinions.

Inspection team

Michele Crichton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 the Education Act 2005 (as amended), 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

- George Hastwell School provides for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs for severe or profound and complex learning difficulties.
- The majority of pupils experience impairments in their communication and some have autistic spectrum disorders.
- Almost all pupils are White British and approximately two thirds are boys.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is significantly above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those children who are looked after by the local authority and services families.
- Pupils join the school at any point in their academic career and almost all continue into the sixth form.
- Currently, three pupils are dual registered with another school.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staff. A new deputy Headteacher was appointed in autumn 2013. There have also been a number of changes to the membership of the governing body. Just after the last inspection, a new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is good or better, to ensure pupils make at least good progress in communication, reading, writing and mathematics especially in Key Stages 3 and 4, by:
 - eradicating any inadequate teaching
 - ensuring that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are assessed and recorded accurately throughout the whole school and their progress tracked carefully so that pupils next steps always build well upon what they already know and can do
 - making sure that staff expectations and targets set for pupils' learning are sufficiently challenging, reviewed regularly and extended quickly when they have been met
 - improving the quality of marking and ensuring the advice given to all pupils is appropriate to their needs, so that pupils know what they have done well and how to improve
 - ensuring activities for pupils who find learning very difficult are matched well to their needs in order to develop their skills in all subjects
 - ensuring pupils are provided with more challenging and stimulating work that maintains their interest and is relevant to their needs so that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are always at least good
 - ensuring that teaching assistants fully understand their role in lessons, are clear about the support they must give to ensure pupils of all ages and abilities learn effectively and receive training so that they have the necessary skills to do so
 - providing opportunities for the teachers to share and learn from the very best teaching practices in other schools
 - making sure all members of staff make the best use of curriculum time during the school to

promote learning.

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management so the school can improve rapidly by:
 - improving the tracking of pupils' progress so that the achievement of different pupils groups can be accurately identified and the necessary support quickly put in place to ensure they make the best possible progress
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning are checked more rigorously and that feedback to teaching and support staff about how to improve pupils' learning is clear and acted upon
 - improving the robustness of performance management for all staff so that they are held fully to account for pupils' progress
 - establishing links with successful schools in the area in order to improve the skills of leaders to drive improvement
 - developing the roles of key leaders and subject leaders in order to strengthen the ability of the school to improve at a faster rate
 - quickly establishing and implementing an effective school improvement plan with clear targets so that improvement is driven forward clearly and at a rapid pace.

- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of governance by:
 - ensuring that governors develop a secure understanding of how well pupils are achieving and an accurate view of the quality of teaching, so that they can help to provide a clear drive for improvement in the areas where it is needed.

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

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Observations of pupils' learning during the inspection, work in their books and files and an analysis of school data show that pupils are making inadequate progress from their individual starting points. This is especially the case in communication, reading, writing and mathematics and in Key Stages 3 and 4, and shows too little sign of improvement.
- Inspection evidence shows that the progress for different groups is too variable. Achievement, including for the most able and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, is inadequate. Work is not matched well enough to ensure they make good progress and their varying needs are not adequately planned for. The school's efforts to promote equality of opportunity are therefore ineffective.
- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2 is now improving. Recent positive changes, such as new systems to measure progress, changes in staff and new leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helping to speed up pupils' progress. These changes are only recent however and have not had enough time to bring about consistently good progress. As a result, achievement in these key stages requires improvement.
- In Key Stages 3 and 4, all groups of pupils underachieve because teaching over time has been weak. Pupils' books and work in folders show progress is too slow because work lacks challenge and is not adequately or consistently matched to the pupils' particular special educational need.
- Transition information from Key Stage 4 regarding pupils' level of achievement and their individual profile of learning is not consistently robust as they enter the next stage of learning in the sixth form.
- Sixth form students develop life skills and all leave with some form of accreditation, such as Entry Level and Functional Skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology. Most go on to further education. Changes to sixth form staff are helping to secure their achievement. Even so, targets for students' learning are still not consistently challenging enough to ensure they make good progress and as a result, their achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is inadequate. The development of reading, as pupils move through the school, is not systematic enough to ensure pupils develop their reading skills well. During the inspection, pupils were keen to share their reading books and enjoyed reading to inspectors. However, pupils' strategies for tackling unfamiliar words are underdeveloped, for example, they do not sound out letters to make a word. The most able readers are able to recognise words; however, staff do not always ensure that they understand what they have read and as a result, their progress is slow.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Over time teaching, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4, does not enable pupils to make sufficiently good progress in their communication, reading, writing and mathematics, from their individual starting points.
- The expectations of teaching staff and other adults as to what pupils can achieve in their learning are too low. Although targets are set for pupils' learning, from the outset these are not sufficiently challenging to demonstrate good progress over time. Targets are not reviewed regularly enough to ensure that more challenging targets are established as soon as pupils have met them. This means that work often lacks challenge for pupils of varying ages and abilities, including the most able.
- As work fails to maintain pupils' interest and sometimes lacks relevance to pupils' needs, pupils find it hard to maintain their concentration, and the behaviour and attitudes to learning for a few can deteriorate.
- Arrangements to assess and accurately record pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are

weak. This means that learning does not build well enough upon what they already know and can do. Work provided is sometimes too hard for some, yet too easy for others.

- The quality of marking is too variable and as a result, too many pupils do not know what they have done well or what they need to do to improve their work. Advice given is not always appropriate to pupils' particular needs.
- The quality of support from teaching assistants overall is weak, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4. This is because not all have the necessary skills to support pupils of all ages and abilities to learn effectively. They do not have a good enough understanding of their role in lessons and are unclear about the support they need to give. Leaders have yet to ensure robust performance management to underpin the training they need to perform their roles to good enough effect.
- The teaching of communication, reading, writing and mathematics skills is inadequate. Activities to develop pupils' basic skills are not planned well enough into the learning activities nor are sufficient links made across different subjects to underpin learning.
- Currently, teaching and learning are stronger in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 than for older pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. New staff who have recently joined the school have brought with them a range of experience and knowledge which is improving the learning in these key stages. However, these are only recent developments and teaching over time remains inadequate.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is more effective. Children find learning interesting, challenging and fun. This is helping to establish good early writing skills. Regular and accurate assessment of what children know and can do enable staff to plan children's learning more carefully. Teaching assistants are more knowledgeable about each child's needs and offer more effective support.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement. Teaching observed during the inspection varied in quality. Activities for the smaller number of students who find learning the most difficult do not sufficiently match their needs because they are not planned well enough over time to systematically develop communication, literacy or numeracy skills. Their individual programmes of learning for their next stages of learning are not adequately revised.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities for physical education activities in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In lessons, predominantly at Key Stage 3 and 4, some pupils' attitudes are not always as good as they could be. They become inattentive, restless or disengage with learning because their work is either too hard, too easy or they have done very similar things a number of times before.
- Although the expectations the staff have of pupils to cooperate and be kind to each other are high, some staff have low expectations of what pupils can achieve in their learning and this impacts on the progress pupils make.
- The majority of pupils behave well around the school, such as at lunchtime and playtime. Adults know the pupils well and strong relationships can be seen throughout the school.
- Staff effectively manage the behaviour of those pupils who sometimes find it hard to manage their own behaviour. If a pupil needs to be removed temporarily from the classroom, this is done quietly and discreetly. Pupils are quickly and quietly reintroduced back into class with the minimum of fuss so that learning for all is not disrupted.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Although pupils say they feel safe in school and trust the staff, the school's systems for recording, analysing and sharing information between staff about pupils' behaviour are inconsistent. What and how staff record can vary and senior leaders have not reviewed this to ensure that all staff, including those new to the school, are recording appropriately to the nature of the incident.
- Pupils know that it is important to treat others fairly and have an understanding of the various types of bullying.
- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and this is shown in their attendance which is above

average for similar schools of this type. They are welcoming to visitors and many are happy to talk about their work and the many visits they make out of school.

- Parents are supportive of the school and are happy with the care and opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences beyond school.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The leadership of teaching is inadequate. Senior leaders have failed to check the quality of teaching carefully enough and have not taken positive enough steps to improve it since the last inspection. Too much now requires improvement or is inadequate, particularly in Key Stage 3 and 4.
- Leaders have been slow to tackle weaknesses in teaching because arrangements for checking and evaluating it are weak. As a consequence, the quality of teaching is too variable. Leaders' judgements of teaching seen along with inspectors were not accurate or well-justified. Records of their own observations of teaching show that its impact on learning is very often judged by leaders to be good or better. This view is overgenerous. The feedback teachers and support staff receive about how to improve pupils' learning is not focused enough and not always acted upon.
- Leaders fail to identify precisely what good teaching and learning look like or what is needed to improve it. They do not take the skills and knowledge that pupils have gained during the lesson into enough account. These weaknesses in the checking of teaching and its support undermine leaders' efforts to manage the performance of staff to good effect. Staff are not fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Leaders and governors are unable to clearly or accurately judge the achievement or progress of individual pupils or groups of pupils. Arrangements for checking pupils' learning and progress are inadequate and have been for a protracted period of time. Leaders, therefore, have a lack of understanding of how well different pupil groups, including the most able or those supported by the pupil premium, are doing. They are unaware, for example, of whether eligible pupils are benefiting from the pupil premium funding, whether there are any gaps in the attainment and progress of groups of pupils or whether any gaps are narrowing or not. The school's use of additional sports funding is currently not monitored or evaluated.
- Leaders' plans to improve the school are weak and out of date. The full senior leadership team is not involved in their development, monitoring and evaluation. Some members of staff undertake too many leadership tasks; others have specific knowledge of certain areas of the school, but not a whole view. Staff perform roles for which they are responsible but not accountable. This means a cohesive and accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the whole school is not held and there is a lack of acute focus on what the school's priorities are. It also results in self-evaluation being inaccurate.
- The local authority holds an inaccurate view of the school's current performance. Consequently, since the school's previous inspection it has given a light-touch level of support. While the local authority has supported the school, for example, by providing specific training for governors, the impact of this is yet to bear fruit.
- Due to recent changes in the arrangements for support from the local authority, it has recommended that closer links are made with other local schools. The school, however, is yet to make the most of opportunities for the teachers to share and learn from the very best teaching practices in other schools or to improve the skills of leaders to drive improvement more quickly.
- The curriculum places a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils spend time working together. This deeply cements the strong moral and supportive ethos in the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted appropriately. Pupils' social skills and their understanding and appreciation of other cultures and lifestyles are gained through their visits and outings. However, too little focus is placed on ensuring it develops their reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills at a good enough rate. Improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and 2 are positive but recent. Although there are

encouraging developments with more focused learning and tracking of pupil progress, insufficient time has elapsed to see their success.

- The new primary school sports funding has been used to extend the range of outdoor play equipment and so that pupils are given more opportunities to develop their control skills. The impact of this, however, on improving pupils' health and well-being is yet to be monitored.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Although the governing body is very supportive of the school and shows great commitment, it does not know enough about how well pupils achieve, including in comparison to others nationally. The governors know too little about the quality of teaching in the school and the achievement of different groups of pupils. For example, they do not know the impact the pupil premium funding is having on the achievement of those pupils for whom it is intended to support, nor on the effectiveness of teachers' performance in relation to any pay increases.
 - Governors are accessing the available training from the local authority to improve their knowledge, understanding and effectiveness. Although there have been some developments to strengthen their knowledge, they have not challenged senior leaders with enough rigour to bring about positive change quickly enough. Developments have taken place very recently and consequently there is little evidence to show the effectiveness they have had. Their efforts to find out about the school rely too heavily on what they are told by staff and leaders. Their collective skills are not yet sufficient to find out enough for themselves to ensure they are rigorously holding the school to account.
 - The governing body does ensure that arrangements to safeguard pupils meet the statutory requirements.

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	112467
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	439461

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Littlewood
Headteacher	Bernard Gummett
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2011
Telephone number	01229 475253
Fax number	01229 471418
Email address	admin@ghastwell.cumbria.sch.uk

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