

Redwood

Hudsons Walk, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL11 5EF

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- School leaders have not sustained the school's outstanding performance identified in the previous inspection.
- School leaders, governors and the local authority, have all taken their 'eyes off the ball.' As a result, the progress of pupils requires improvement.
- The quality of teaching is not as high as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Several staff think the school does not make appropriate provision for their professional development.
- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. A number of staff are not confident about how pupils' behaviour is managed by school leaders.
- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Too many of the less able pupils are not making good or better progress in lessons and over time.
- Provision in the sixth form is not outstanding as it was judged at the previous inspection. This is because pupils are not as well prepared for further study when they enter.
- Overall, learning across the school is inconsistent.

The school has the following strengths

- Some teaching is good or better, especially in the sixth form.
- Pupils feel safe and they enjoy coming to school.
- Some aspects of subject leadership has improved since the previous inspection.
- The school's systems for measuring pupils' personal development are good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons and parts of lessons, taught by teachers and support staff. Most observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. The inspection team examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- The inspection team held meetings and had discussions with pupils, the school’s senior leaders and other staff and the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. A discussion with a representative from the local authority was also held.
- The inspection team took into account the 19 parent responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) and the 125 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspection team scrutinised safeguarding information, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff, pupils’ attendance data and the school’s own information about pupils’ progress.

Inspection team

Henry Moreton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Massey	Additional Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs.
- The main groups are pupils with moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Other groups have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, and multi-sensory impairment and physical disability.
- There are about twice as many boys as girls.
- Approximately three-quarters of the pupils are White British, with several minority ethnic groups, mainly Pakistani or Bangladeshi.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils come from the area around Rochdale. Some of the older pupils are independent travellers but the vast majority of pupils are transported to and from school.
- Several groups of pupils attend external provision. These are at Oulder Hill Community School, Rochdale Hospital, Rochdale Borough Council and Hopwood Hall College.
- The headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body have been in post since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - addressing the low morale of a significant number of staff
 - ensuring all school leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching
 - ensuring governors have an accurate view of the school's performance.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils by:
 - ensuring policies for managing pupils' behaviour are consistently applied throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers are provided with appropriate professional development opportunities.
 - ensuring good and better practice is disseminated across the school.
- Improve the achievement of pupils by:
 - planning lessons and activities so that the less able pupils make better progress.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's leadership and management require improvement overall. This is not an inadequate school but it has not improved since its previous inspection and has gone backwards. School leaders acknowledge many of the inconsistencies across the whole school.
- While the majority of staff are supportive of the school's leadership and management, a significant number are not.
- The quality of teaching has not improved since the previous inspection. While there is some good or better teaching, much requires improvement. Several staff raised concerns about the school's provision for their professional development.
- During the inspection, the inspection team did not observe any inappropriate student behaviour and those parents who responded to Parent View did not raise behaviour as an issue. However, a significant proportion of staff do not think that behaviour is consistently well managed.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding well. The performance of disadvantaged pupils is measured against the progress made by others in the cohort and appropriate programmes are put in place for individual pupils. The areas targeted are: communication, health and well-being, curriculum enhancement and one-to-one and small group work. As a result of these interventions, pupils who are supported by this money make the same progress as others, and in some cases their progress is better.
- The school's promotion of equality of opportunity requires improvement. Too often it is the less able pupils who do not make the progress expected.
- The school tackles discrimination well and the student community is cohesive, with pupils respectful of each other. The school has fostered a wide range of links and enjoys good relations with its community, however, senior leaders have failed to realise that communications within the school are not always as they should be.
- Middle leaders are improving as a result of efforts made since the previous inspection, when performance in this area was identified as a weakness. However, this large and complex school is managed as three separate departments which causes disjointedness and is impacting adversely on pupils' achievement, as well as on staff morale.
- The curriculum is always developing as a result of the changing nature of the pupil intake, which is becoming more demanding year on year. It meets the needs of the older pupils and the more able pupils well. For example, the more able Year 7 and Year 9 pupils are well provided for, respectively through the transition group and the accelerated learning programme. The learning needs of the less able pupils are not being met as well and the curriculum for this group requires improvement throughout the school. Arrangements for short course provision and work related learning are developing well for the more able pupils in years 10 and 11.
- The local authority does not have a secure knowledge and understating of the school's performance and has not identified its declining performance since the school's previous inspection.
- The school has a good view about the impact of the various alternative provisions, and these are making a positive impact on the more able pupils' academic performance and personal development.
- The work of the school in helping pupils to make informed choices about their next steps is good. The transition arrangements from Year 9 into Key Stage 4 are good as are the mechanisms to support Year 11 pupils to their next destinations.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school has not been effective since the previous inspection. Governors do not have an accurate view about the school's performance, including the quality of teaching. Crucially, governors are unaware of the extent of discontent amongst a cross-section of the school's staff. They do have a clear understanding of the school's data and how it compares with similar schools and they offer senior leaders good levels of support. Governors manage pupil premium funding well and this careful management has enabled them to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. As a result, last year, this group made the same and, on occasions, better progress than their peers in the school. Although attainment for this group remained low, their progress from starting points was at least as expected, and often better. The governing body has a system for checking the performance of all staff which is designed to reward good teaching and address underperformance. However, this system is only effective if the information provided to them is accurate. Safeguarding policies and procedures are of good quality and meet current requirements. Governors ensure that financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively. Governors are committed and not complacent, but they have allowed the school's leaders to take their foot off the peddle and have overseen declining school

performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. It is often good and many pupils respond well to the responsibilities they have, such as young leaders. However, when activities in lessons fail to meet their needs their attention slips.
- A significant proportion of staff do not consider the behaviour of pupils to be good, or it to be managed well.
- Despite the high levels of need of many pupils, learning observed during the inspection was rarely interrupted by incidents of difficult behaviour.
- Staff promote a caring approach where all pupils are valued. They enjoy spending time with pupils and successfully model good attitudes. As a result, inspectors saw a calm environment, including at break and lunchtimes.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View believe the school improves the attitude and behaviour of their children.
- Attendance is average. The attendance of many pupils is outstanding but is not for others, mostly for medical reasons. Punctuality is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Many of the pupils who attend are particularly vulnerable to a range of different dangers, including sexual exploitation. School staff work closely with different agencies to reduce the risks faced by pupils.
- Staff are good at recognising the challenges faced by pupils and take effective action to ensure their safety and well-being.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are clear about the different forms bullying can take and know the appropriate steps they should take should an incident occur inside or outside school.
- Most of the parents who responded to Parent View believe their children are safe and happy in school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time in most subjects, including English and mathematics, requires improvement so that all groups of pupils can achieve well and make good or better progress.
- In many of the lessons observed by inspectors, mostly with senior school leaders, the achievement of pupils required improvement.
- The quality of teaching has declined since the previous inspection because not all of the school's leaders have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. This applies mostly to the less able pupils since most of the more able pupils make good progress in lessons and over time.
- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics require improvement. The teaching of English does not typically engage less-able pupils in the use of a wide range of communication aids and there is too little use of technology to support pupils' learning.
- The teaching of reading requires improvement because the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is inconsistent across the school. The teaching of mathematics requires improvement because teacher's planning for the development of pupils' acquisition of knowledge and understanding is not consistent across the school.
- Some parents who responded to the Parent View indicated that they would like their children to bring more work home and inspectors found that not all pupils take reading books or their symbol books home regularly.
- The marking of pupils' work is often verbal and is regular, accurate and typically helpful.
- A number of teachers told inspectors that the school's leaders are not doing all they can to improve teaching and that, in spite of some workshops this year, appropriate provision is not made for their professional development in light of the changing school population.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Pupils' attainment on entry is usually well below that expected for their age because of their learning difficulties.
- Progress across year groups is not consistently good for all groups, including for those who receive additional funding, and inspection evidence shows that achievement in English and mathematics requires improvement. Progress in pupils' personal development is good, and often outstanding.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that of other pupils in the school.
- The more able pupils often achieve well because of teachers' expectations, effective planning for their needs and good personal support.
- Pupils' sporting skills are improving and they are developing healthy lifestyles because they are able to take part in physical activities regularly.
- After-school and other clubs contribute activities that help pupils develop new and different skills.
- The school develops the more able pupils' independence well through its effective independent travel programme.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision achieve well and school leaders make good use of its extensive partnerships.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well and this is evidenced by their destinations when they leave school.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and their achievement is not inadequate; but it is not at the standard it was at the time of the previous inspection.

The sixth form provision**is good**

- The sixth form is good although it is less successful than it was at the time of the previous inspection because pupils are not as well enough prepared for further study when they enter.
- Programmes and accredited courses meet the more able students' needs and abilities well. As a result, they respond and behave well, showing good attitudes to their studies.
- The quality of teaching is good over time. Relationships between students and staff are good and students are well supported in lessons. Students know that there is always somebody to talk to if problems arise.
- Progress is good overall and is outstanding for the more able students. Students are given as much independence as possible and staff work hard to ensure they make the best of their time in the sixth form.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is good and the more able students are able to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills because of the focus on practical activities, for example, working as team to estimate how long it takes for a table tennis ball to travel a short distance.
- Students make good progress on their accredited courses and this prepares them well for their future lives.
- A number of the more able students make outstanding progress as a result of the links with local employers, and this leads to employment for some when they leave the sixth form.

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	135202
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	448940

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Sherriff
Headteacher	Stuart Pidgeon
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2012
Telephone number	01706 750815
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