

# The Oswaldtwistle School

Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 3DA

**Inspection dates** 18–19 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leadership and management require improvement because the good levels of teaching identified in the last inspection have not been maintained.
- Targets set for students' achievement are not always sufficiently challenging. Systems in place to check on students' progress towards targets are not always sufficiently robust.
- Although regular checks are carried out by senior leaders on the progress of students who attend the offsite alternative provision, they do not always monitor progress in English and mathematics as closely as they should and, as a result, progress for some students slows.
- Teaching requires improvement overall. Work in some students' books shows slower progress because too much time is spent on going over work that students already know.
- Teaching assistants sometimes lack direction in their work and support for students with additional needs is less effective than it should be. When this happens progress slows.
- The school's marking policy is not always adhered to. As a result, marking and feedback do not give students clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Students' achievement requires improvement overall because too many make too little progress in English and mathematics from their different starting points in both the main school and the alternative provision.

### The school has the following strengths

- 'Nobody here is a bullied' commented a student. This view was echoed by other students spoken to during the inspection, supporting inspection findings that, despite their often high level of need, the vast majority of students improve their behaviour once they settle into school routines.
- Students clearly feel safe and enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in the often dramatic improvement in their attendance to close to and sometimes above the national average.
- Students often make good and better progress in English and mathematics in the main school and the majority of offsite provision.
- The inclusion of two senior leaders from local secondary schools has increased the strength and knowledge of the management committee. As a result, they have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to advance the school and are playing a key role in bringing about improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed a good number of lessons and parts of lessons taught by teachers and support staff. One lesson observation was undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspection team also examined the quality of work in the books of students from across the school.
- Meetings and discussions took place with students, the headteacher, middle leaders, members of the school's staff and two members of the management committee. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took into account the views of 12 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account the views of nine other parents who had recently completed questionnaires set by the school.
- The inspection team studied health and safety documentation, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff, students' attendance data and the school's system for checking students' progress.

## Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a pupil referral unit which offers education to Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students who are either permanently excluded from school or are in danger of being excluded from school in Accrington, Rossendale and surrounding areas of East Lancashire. A small number of students come from other areas of the country and a number are in the care of the local authority.
- Since the previous inspection the pupil referral unit has merged with the Lancashire Education Medical Service (LEMS), a pupil referral unit which met the needs of students who are unable to attend school due to medical or mental health issues. These students now attend the school and make up approximately 20 percent of the student population.
- Students stay within the provision for varying lengths of time dependent on their level of need. Last year almost one third made a successful return to a mainstream school.
- There are 75 students on roll, the vast majority of whom are from families of White British heritage.
- Currently, 20 students attend offsite provision in variously Bolton College, Accrington College, TAS school and North Lancs Training College. The majority attend full-time with a smaller number attending on a part-time basis.
- All students who currently attend are identified as having social, mental and emotional health needs and are supported at school action plus. Currently, few have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of students who attend are disadvantaged (students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority who are supported by additional funding). This is much higher than the national average. Because students come from a number of different local authorities, the school does not always access the full funding for these students.
- Students work towards a range of accreditations including GCSE mathematics, English, science, sports leadership, design technology, food technology, a wide range of entry level qualifications, and Duke of Edinburgh awards.
- Since the school's previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed and, very recently, two assistant headteachers have been appointed and are due in post in January 2015.
- The school offers an outreach service to other mainstream schools which offers advice and support on managing students' behaviour.
- The school now manages its own budget in line with recent changes and links to the local authority are now through a service level agreement.

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - improving current systems which check students' progress and ensuring that targets set for students are sufficiently challenging
  - increasing the level of monitoring undertaken of the achievement in English and mathematics of students who are educated in alternative provision.
- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate students' achievement by :
  - ensuring work set more accurately matches the needs of students
  - ensuring support assistants are sufficiently clear about what is needed to support students with additional needs
  - ensuring that marking and feedback give students clear guidance on how to improve the quality and presentation of their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and newly appointed deputy headteacher are clear about what is needed to move the school forward and have already begun to improve the achievement of students through, for example, increasing the amount of time allocated to English and mathematics.
- However, they recognise more needs to be done. For example, although systems to check on students' progress from clearly identified starting points are in place in different subject areas, an overarching system which checks the progress of all students is not yet securely in place.
- Currently almost a third of students receive education in settings other than the school. These alternative provisions are often successful at capturing students' interest and getting them to engage and enjoy learning once again, particularly those with the highest level of need. However, provision for mathematics and English is sometimes variable and in some provisions students follow courses that do not reflect their ability or potential.
- Whilst regular visits are undertaken to each alternative provision and students' welfare and attendance is diligently checked, until recently there has been too little monitoring undertaken of the quality of English and mathematics curriculum delivered to students. However, senior leaders are in the process of addressing this through a more robust system.
- The role of middle leaders is not yet fully developed within the school. Because of its small size the majority of teachers are responsible for the planning and teaching of an area of the curriculum with senior leaders overseeing the quality of teaching in each subject area. Senior leaders have addressed this through the recent appointment of two assistant headteachers who will take on middle leadership roles supporting senior leaders to bring about improvement.
- The headteacher ensures performance targets for staff link directly to targets within the school's improvement plan. Checks carried out on the performance of staff are undertaken and this information has been used to make decisions on teachers' pay.
- Leaders have taken account of planned changes to the secondary curriculum and have ensured the current curriculum has incorporated these changes. For example, areas have been identified within different subjects which prepare students well for life in British society. This ensures they develop an understanding and appreciation of different views and cultures.
- The curriculum is enriched with visits away from the classroom. These enable students to broaden their horizons, understanding and experiences. For example, students regularly climb at an outdoor pursuits centre. This was described by one student as: 'Difficult at first but it felt good when I eventually reached the top'. Challenges such as this increase students' self-esteem and, coupled with work carried out in the local community, contribute to students' levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Since the last inspection the management committee has undergone much change including the appointment of a new chair. Currently, members have a wide range of skills and experiences. For example, several hold management positions in other mainstream schools. The chair of the committee is a senior leader in a local mainstream secondary and has an exceptionally clear understanding of students' achievement through the interpretation and understanding of the school's own and national data. As a result, the committee is now well placed to offer senior leaders good levels of support and challenge in their quest to bring about further improvement.
  - The management committee have put in place a robust system which monitors the performance of senior leaders against challenging targets. This is being used effectively to bring about change and eliminate underperformance.
  - The management committee are currently undertaking a review of the way in which extra funding to support disadvantaged students is used and have plans in place to increase support through, for example, supporting students on a one to one basis in order to accelerate progress for this group.
  - Safeguarding procedures and policies are of good quality and meet current requirements. Committee members undertake regular child protection training alongside all school staff. They also ensure that financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively as evidenced by the school's current healthy budget.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Despite the high levels of need of many students, learning is infrequently disrupted by poor behaviour. When behaviour dips, for example where students are new to the school, staff actions ensure that disruption to learning is minimised.
- Leaders and staff promote a caring approach across the school with the result that all students feel equally valued. They form strong and caring relationships with students and model good behaviour and attitudes. As a result, a harmonious atmosphere prevails during the majority of breaks and lunchtimes.
- Most parents believe the school improves the attitude and behaviour of their children and are appreciative of the support given to themselves and their families by school staff.
- School records show that incidents of difficult behaviour reduce as students settle into school routines. A climate of mutual respect prevails and a restorative approach to incidents of difficult behaviour, which helps students to recognise the consequences of their actions, contributes to this improvement.
- A comment from one student summed up this approach well: 'Staff here keep on caring about you no matter what you do'.
- Attendance has continued to improve since the previous inspection. Analysis of individual students' attendance records shows that the vast majority increase their attendance significantly when they join the school. Overall attendance is close to the national average.
- This good rate of improvement is due to a range of measures put in place by the school. For example, while senior leaders recognise the importance of developing good timekeeping and independent travel skills, the provision of a taxi service which collects them reduces significantly the journey times for many students and has improved their punctuality.
- The work of senior leaders in improving the behaviour of students goes beyond the bounds of the school. The local authority confirmed the high regard with which leaders are held by other mainstream schools for giving advice and support on improving behaviour and reducing the numbers of students who are permanently excluded. A senior leader of a local high school who spoke to the inspection team confirmed this.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good
- Students who attend are often recognised as vulnerable to a range of different dangers, including sexual exploitation. Senior leaders work successfully with different agencies, including the police, social care and health care professionals, to reduce the risks faced by students.
- Staff are good at understanding the challenges faced by students and a comprehensive internet safety policy ensures students are clear about how to stay safe when accessing the internet.
- Students spoken to were adamant they feel safe in school. They are very clear about the different forms bullying can take, including cyber-bullying, and recognise the appropriate actions should an incident occur inside or outside school.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching and students' learning is not yet consistently good. Student progress records and evidence in students' books support the view that the quality of teaching requires improvement over time.
- However, students more recent work shows improvement in both English and mathematics, and work seen in science books during the inspection shows good progress over time.
- The majority of staff in the school use information about students' previous learning to plan work effectively. However, work planned for the most able does not always meet their needs. For example, in mathematics, sometimes after most able students have mastered a skill, the work set for them does not extend or deepen their learning further because too often it is more of the same. This slows progress and also contributes to students' lack of motivation and disengagement.
- A similar lack of challenge could also be seen in students' English books at times.
- Many students clearly enjoy reading as evidenced by a comment made by a younger student 'I just love reading, particularly books by Michael Morpurgo and Jacqueline Wilson because they deal with problems faced by people of my age'. However, reading as a whole is not sufficiently well promoted across the school and this holds back students' progress at times. Senior leaders are aware of this and are planning a

more focussed approach to reading across the school.

- Teaching assistants work in almost all classrooms. While the majority of them support learning well and are knowledgeable about the curriculum as well as the behavioural needs of students, others sometimes take too passive a role in activities set or provide too much support by, for example, completing pieces of work for the students. This approach reduces students' skills as independent learners and slows progress.
- The progress made by disadvantaged students requires improvement alongside other groups of students. This is because, although changes instigated by senior leaders are starting to close the gap, in the past extra funding has not always been used to best effect. Where students' needs are clearly identified, extra sessions for disadvantaged students who need extra help with their learning are effective and examples of this could clearly be seen in books.
- Students' work is mostly marked diligently. However, the school's marking policy is not always fully adhered to and so it is not always made clear to students how they can improve the presentation and content of their work. When this happens, progress slows and presentation becomes shoddy in some books.
- Lessons in personal and social education, and art and design, promotes students' good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement overall. Whilst last year's leavers all attained a range of accreditation and qualifications, including those who attended offsite provision, a smaller than expected percentage achieved grades close to the national average.
- School data shows that currently students are on track for similar results. However, senior leaders are aware of this and recent changes to the curriculum, which have increased the amount of time allocated to mathematics and English, are beginning to show improvement.
- Students often arrive with very low levels of literacy and numeracy, often lower than those expected at the end of Key Stage 2. They frequently arrive after periods away from education, sometimes as long as a year or more, due often to their poor levels of behaviour or chaotic lifestyles. However, once they settle into the stable routines of both the school and alternative provision they are ready to learn.
- Students who attend the alternative provision often achieve good levels of accreditation in vocational areas of the curriculum. However, too few attain good grades in more academic subjects such as mathematics and English often because of low expectations of staff. Senior leaders are aware of this and have planned systems to improve the quality of monitoring of students' achievement.
- Students' progress in reading requires improvement because, overall, students lack encouragement to read and staff miss opportunities to promote reading. For example, too often staff will read text for students rather than encouraging them to practise their skills in class.
- The majority of students are disadvantaged and their attainment remains lower than national age-related expectations often because of the wide gaps in their previous learning. However, whilst gaps begin to close for some students, overall they make less progress than those nationally, making similar rates of progress to their peers. This is progress that requires improvement.
- The progress of the most able requires improvement because in both the school and in alternative settings sometimes work set for them lacks challenge and does not meet their needs sufficiently accurately.
- All groups of students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make equal progress across the curriculum - progress which requires improvement.

## 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>	134127
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448021

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	75
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Management Committee
<b>Chair</b>	Nicky Palmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Bocker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 231553
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