

Landgate School, Bryn

Landgate Lane, Bryn, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Greater Manchester, WN4 0EP

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leadership does not provide a clear enough direction for improvement, which has limited the progress of the school. The governors do not hold senior leaders fully to account. Many subject leaders have new responsibilities and are not yet effective. Staff attendance is not good enough.
- Many parents do not have full confidence in the leadership of the school and are not convinced that their concerns are responded to effectively.
- Post-16 provision requires improvement because it does not fully meet the students' needs.
- Some safeguarding policies and information on the school's website are not up to date. The school's procedures for managing pupils' arrivals and departures are not secure.
- Teaching is not consistently good and therefore pupils do not make enough progress. This is because performance data are not used effectively by staff. Moreover, some time is wasted in class and the teaching assistants have too few opportunities to work with the pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- A leadership team is developing capacity with the enthusiasm and determination to improve. The leadership of mathematics is particularly good. The Chair of the Governing Body is fully committed to the school. Other governors are developing their links with specific aspects of the school and this is starting to increase their challenge to the leadership of the school.
- Children in the early years provision get off to a good start because of good teaching, positive links with parents and the skilled contribution of the speech and language therapist.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy practical subjects, including physical education, music and art and design. Teaching is good in these subjects and, consequently, pupils make good progress.
- Behaviour in class and around the school is good and pupils' attendance is above average. This is helped by the good promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Challenging behaviour is managed effectively. All parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire agreed, or strongly agreed, that their children are happy at school and feel safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, some of them jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents as well as the school's website. The documents included the school's information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' work.
- An inspector scrutinised the arrival and departure of pupils. Inspectors observed pupils during the morning break and lunchtime and spoke with a group of pupils.
- Meetings took place with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the speech and language therapist, the Chair and another member of the Governing Body. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with a teacher in a local mainstream school, where a small number of pupils from Landgate School join lessons.
- The inspectors took account of the 31 parents' responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) and 22 responses to a recent survey carried out by the school. The 40 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

David Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Massey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils who attend the school have a statement of special educational needs. A large proportion of the pupils are diagnosed with autistic spectrum conditions with associated communication difficulties and, at times, behavioural difficulties. There are many more boys than girls on roll.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The school has full-time early years provision.
- A small number of pupils attend some lessons in local mainstream and special schools.
- The current headteacher is absent due to illness and, as a result, the school has an acting headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of the issues raised in a complaint received by Ofsted since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - making sure that senior leaders more accurately and precisely check on all aspects of the school and provide a clear direction for school improvement
 - ensuring that subject leaders are effectively trained and held fully accountable for their responsibilities so that they can make a greater contribution to school improvement
 - improving staff attendance, to ensure that the pupils are provided with a consistent staff team
 - senior leaders and governors ensuring that all safeguarding policies and information to parents on the website are up to date
 - ensuring that the procedures for the arrival and collection of pupils at the school are safe
 - improving links with parents by doing more to share information about the school's work and pupils' progress.
- Improve the provision for post-16 students by establishing their clear identity within the school and focusing effectively on the needs of the older students.
- Improve teaching so that all pupils make good progress from their different starting points, by:
 - ensuring that pupils' progress data are accurate and used effectively in classes to improve progress
 - making sure that all of the time and staff available in class are used effectively to improve pupils' 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

require improvement

- School leaders have not ensured good-quality teaching across the school. Judgements have not been secure with too little attention given to assessing pupils' typical progress over time. Self-review has been over-optimistic and has not informed a sufficiently sharp agenda for continuous improvement. Consequently, achievement across the school has declined.
- However, leaders work hard and have the enthusiasm and ability to move the school forward. Crucially, they understand the need to build stronger links with parents to get them more positively engaged and actively involved with the school. New assessment systems have been developed but have not yet had time to make a difference to developing the accuracy and use of the information about pupils' progress.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have quite rightly devoted a significant proportion of their time on a thorough investigation of complaints made by a small number of parents and carers of pupils at the school. Leaders have worked effectively with other professionals and the local authority to ensure that suitable procedures have been put in place to minimise the risk of harm to any pupils at the school.
- The local authority has been actively involved in responding to complaints about the school from a small number of parents.
- The leadership of some subjects is good. Consequently, the curriculum for subjects such as mathematics, physical education, music and art and design helps to promote good progress. The required changes to the curriculum have been made. However, some subject leaders are not yet effective and they require additional training, combined with greater accountability for their work.
- The promotion of literacy and numeracy is evident in most classes but the use of literacy in all subjects is not monitored closely enough.
- The school has positive links with local mainstream and special schools. Landgate staff support pupils when they attend mainstream classes and can, therefore, monitor their pupils' attendance and behaviour. Staff work closely with parents to help the students make informed choices about their next steps when they leave the school.
- Regular training provides staff with information about strategies to improve pupils' behaviour. Staff training designed to keep pupils safe is up to date. The school tackles any discrimination within the context of the pupils' complex needs and the school's ethos promotes equality of opportunity for all.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Encouraging pupils' understanding of values in modern Britain is central to the school's work. For example, pupils participate in a range of events, including opportunities to raise money for charities. This provides opportunities to extend the pupils' understanding of the roles these organisations play in national life.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement because governors have not sufficiently held senior leaders to account for teaching and for the accuracy of data on the school's performance. Governors are now increasing their knowledge of the strengths and areas for development by expanding links with specific aspects of the school. For example, a governor is taking a particular interest in assessment and is using his expertise to improve practice in this area.
 - Governors have ensured that there is a link between good teaching and progression through the pay scales but too little has been done to tackle underperformance. They are aware of how additional funding is spent and understand where it is making a difference. For example, they oversee the spending of the primary school sport funding, which is used to provide extra swimming time and which is helping to raise pupils' confidence in water.
 - They also monitor the effectiveness of the use of the pupil premium funding, to check there are no gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers in school.
 - Governors meet statutory requirements for safeguarding and place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. However, although the school's safeguarding policy has been updated, it is not re-visited frequently enough. The latest version of the policy is not available on the school's website.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in class and around the school. Staff management of challenging behaviour is effective. Lunchtime is well supervised to avoid potential risks and good opportunities are taken to extend the pupils' communication skills. Friendship groups are an important and

effective means of extending pupils' social skills during the lunch break.

- Members of the school council have positive views about the school, teaching and staff. They say that some pupils' behaviour can be 'naughty' but believe staff manage these pupils well.
- Pupils enjoy being at school and their attendance is above average. The use of exclusions is low.
- Pupils behave well when they attend classes in local mainstream and special schools.
- There are many rewards for positive attitudes and good behaviour. For example, pupils enjoyed the award of tokens when they correctly indicated the Spanish word for a specific day of the week. A governor highlighted that the celebration event in July was well attended by parents who shared the very successful recognition of pupils' achievements.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe requires improvement. Pupils are encouraged to keep safe and staff ensure that access to the school site is carefully monitored. There is a strong focus on keeping pupils safe when they are working online. The completion of risk assessments for activities, such as carriage driving, is very thorough.
- Rigorous staff training ensures that any use of physical intervention is effective in keeping pupils and staff safe. These incidents are recorded but the school is not rigorous enough in reporting them to parents. Opportunities are lost to meet with parents to develop shared strategies for the positive management of behaviour following physical intervention.
- Pupils are kept safe by adapting the furniture in the classrooms to lessen the chance of placing pupils at risk. However, the arrangements for organising the pupils' arrival at school and their departure are not secure. Minibuses are left on occasions unattended with their engines running and vehicles sometimes move before all unloading is completed.
- All parents who completed the Ofsted online survey agree that their children are well looked after at school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet typically good. On occasions, the information about pupils' progress is not used effectively to plan for their learning. This means that there is variation in the level of challenge provided for their learning and, as a result, progress is not good enough. Moreover, particularly at Key Stage 3, not all of the available time in class is used effectively. Staff expectations are too low, which limits progress and pupils underachieve. On occasions, teaching assistants have limited opportunity to contribute to pupils' learning and this also slows progress.
- The impact of teaching in literacy, reading and mathematics varies across the school. It is good for many of the pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 but requires improvement at Key Stage 3.
- When teachers use their thorough understanding of pupils' strengths and areas for development, planning is clear and pupils learn well. For example, enthusiastic teaching ensures pupils make good progress developing their high-quality pieces of abstract art. It is impressive to see that they are aware of the artist on whose work their assignments are based and that they can explain the meaning of the word 'abstract'. Pupils also make particularly good progress in creating music as part of an animation project. They support each other very well and are very keen to perform in front of their peers. In addition, students in Key Stage 4 mathematics made good progress in managing data with great determination and success.
- A good range of evidence is used to record pupils' work. This includes photographic records, which indicate the levels of pupils' engagement and participation in activities. For the higher-attaining pupils, there is written evidence of their activities. They take pride in their work and aspects of good progress are evident. Work is marked and the next steps in learning are made clear. Pupils also have the opportunity to respond at an appropriate level related to their communication skills. This system provides a good foundation but is not used consistently across the school to help raise the levels of challenge.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- On entry to the early years provision, children's skills and knowledge are significantly below those that are typical for their age. As they progress through the school, some pupils work at levels similar to those of their mainstream peers. The school does focus on meeting the needs of all pupils. However, limitations in the use of progress data and some weaknesses in teaching mean that progress is not good/fast enough

and achievement requires improvement.

- New assessment systems have been established but there is a lack of confidence in the accuracy of the current performance information. Despite this, when looking at pupils' previous work, it is clear that a majority of pupils are making good progress in subjects which are taught well. This is particularly the case in physical education, music, and art and design. Artwork around the school and in classes is of high quality and a credit to the pupils.
- The achievement of all groups of pupils is similar. The progress of boys is comparable to that of girls and pupils eligible for support through additional funding achieve as well as others.
- Progress is stronger in mathematics than it is in English; this is due to good leadership of mathematics.
- In Year 2, questioning is used effectively to develop pupils' early writing skills by extending their knowledge of descriptive words. There are some limitations in the use of signing but good use of visual support to promote social language. There is a wide range of reading skills and some children have a knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), which they use with varying levels of confidence. Other pupils are able to identify the pictures used in these sessions but have not yet developed the skills to answer questions.
- Staff absence affects the continuity and consistency of learning for many pupils, which slows down their progress. The pupils respond best to staff with whom they are familiar and with whom they have developed trusting relationships.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has provided more opportunities for the older pupils to follow accredited subjects. Links with mainstream schools help to ensure that higher-attaining pupils are fully challenged. Small numbers of higher-attaining pupils are working at levels similar to those of their peers in mainstream schools. A teacher from a mainstream school reported examples of high levels of attainment in science at Key Stage 3 and above-average attainment in GCSE art and design. The more able pupils are provided with good opportunities to attain at higher levels and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are significantly below what is typical for their age. They get off to a good start in their school lives and make good progress in both Nursery and Reception. They enjoy playing in the classroom and outside. They make good progress in their physical development, emotional health and well-being. Their learning experiences are extended by just the right amount of support and challenge from the staff team. Children's progress is tracked well and accurately, which provides clear measures of children's strengths and areas for development.
- The quality of teaching is good. The staff team works closely with the speech therapist to plan carefully activities that are set at the right level for the children. This ensures that they are challenged to make good progress.
- Children make good progress in their regular phonics sessions. This is made possible by the use of a wide range of switches, symbols and pictures that enable the children to respond. The contribution of the speech and language therapist is a particular strength, and helps the children to make good progress in developing their communication skills.
- Behaviour is good. Children are starting to interact well with adults and other children. Relationships are positive and there is an effective focus on keeping children safe and secure. Staff work well with parents, keeping them regularly informed about their children's welfare and progress.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. There is a clear focus on staff training, which helps to build an effective staff team and promotes continuous improvement. The involvement with parents helps to develop a true partnership and this is a major strength in the early years.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement. However, there is enthusiastic leadership and an ambitious plan for the future, which gives confidence in the capacity for improvement.
- The sixth form does not have a separate identity within the school, which limits the opportunities to provide age-appropriate activities. There is no separate post-16 accommodation and, therefore, students are taught alongside Key Stage 4 students. This means that the older students do not have enough responsibility for their own personal and academic development.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good but a narrow range of opportunities to learn appropriate skills in the

local community limits progress, so achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Access to accredited courses has improved since the previous inspection and this helps to provide appropriate levels of challenge.

- Students behave well and are keen to learn. They make good progress in English and mathematics, because there are consistently high expectations and a focus on relevant and practical skills to help the students in everyday life. Good progress was seen in mathematics, where students improved their skills in using bar charts to manage data. Skilled questioning challenged the students to use complex mathematical terms accurately to explain their work. The staff work very well together as a team and are very good role models for the students.
- Visitors to the school have helped to develop students' understanding of the world of work. In addition, the use of a local allotment and membership of a gym are positive initiatives enjoyed by the students. However, there are too few opportunities for the students to be actively involved in the local community.

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	134297
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	448045

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	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Winstanley
Headteacher	Janet Sharps
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2012
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