

Lansbury Bridge School

Lansbury Avenue, Parr, St Helens, WA9 1TB

Inspection dates

9–10 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Governors have not held the school to account effectively. They have failed to ensure that the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is adequate.
- Not all staff, including those responsible for leading on safeguarding matters, have received up-to-date safeguarding training. Some practices to support pupils, particularly in restraining those who present challenging behaviours, are unsafe. Leaders do not respond swiftly enough to remedy such situations.
- Since the last inspection, leaders, including governors, have failed to prevent the significant decline in the school's overall effectiveness.
- Leaders and governors have an inaccurate view of the school's effectiveness and lack the ability to improve it quickly enough. They do not ensure that resources, such as the pupil premium, are used effectively. Not all pupils receive their full entitlement to teaching time.
- Arrangements to measure and track pupils' attainment and progress are weak. Leaders do not have a good enough understanding of how well individual pupils and groups are progressing.
- Across Key Stages 1 to 4, pupils' progress in developing their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills requires improvement because the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Teachers' assessments of what pupils know and can do are not always accurate. Consequently, work provided to pupils does not always match their particular needs and abilities, especially for the most able, who are insufficiently challenged.

The school has the following strengths

- As a result of good teaching and effective support, children in the early years receive a good start to their education.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, sensitive and supportive of one another.
- Pupils' attendance is higher than that found in similar schools.
- Wide-ranging learning experiences are provided which focus strongly on developing pupils' personal and social skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a range of lessons across the school. The headteacher and lead inspector jointly observed learning during a walk around the school and in one lesson that they watched together.
- The inspectors held informal discussions with pupils in lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes. They also met with a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the arrival of pupils to school in the morning. The inspectors met with senior and middle leaders. They also met with a group of governors, including the staff and teacher representatives, to discuss the school's performance.
- The inspectors reviewed samples of school policies, records of behaviour and safety incidents, documents showing how the school monitors its performance, reports from an independent consultant on aspects of the school's work and minutes of meetings of the governing body's meetings.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and records of teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements.
- The lead inspector met with the school improvement partner, who is independent from the local authority, and had telephone conversations with a local authority representative and the local authority designated officer representing the local safeguarding board.
- The inspectors considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They read parents' comments in pupils' home-school diaries and talked with parents attending a school coffee morning.
- The inspectors considered 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Susan Hayter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of 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

- All of the pupils attending the school have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school provides education for pupils with a range of special educational needs, including moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical disabilities and sensory impairments. A large proportion of pupils also have autistic spectrum conditions.
- Education is provided for children in the early years on a full- or part-time basis, depending on their readiness for full-time school. The 24 children in the early years are taught in three groups, separate from the Key Stage 1 pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and most are boys.
- The school provides advice and training to mainstream schools about strategies to support pupils with special educational needs.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014.
- The school uses Mill Green Special School and two local colleges, Carmel College and St Helens College, as alternative placements for Year 11 pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take urgent steps to secure pupils' safety across the school by making sure that:
 - all staff, including the designated safeguarding leaders, quickly receive up-to-date and appropriate safeguarding training and that this is maintained in the future
 - staff always respond quickly and thoroughly to any incidents impacting on pupils' safety and that the necessary actions are taken to minimise risk to pupils
 - the strategies used, including restraint, to support pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour are reviewed and revised to ensure that practices are safe and effective and respect pupils' rights
 - all staff follow the school's agreed approach to physical intervention
 - the policy and procedures for making sure that staff, volunteers, frequent visitors and governors are suitable to work in school take into account the particular vulnerabilities of pupils attending the school.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that the school has the ability to improve quickly by:
 - strengthening the arrangements to measure and track pupils' attainment and progress accurately
 - making sure that leaders at all levels, including governors, develop their skills and knowledge of pupil progress information, so that they have an accurate view of how well pupils are learning and of the school's performance, including in comparison with similar pupils in other schools
 - further improving the rigour with which leaders and managers at all levels check the quality of teaching, including making sure that teachers' assessments of pupils' skills are accurate, and ensure that their actions aimed at improving teaching are effective, so that it improves quickly
 - ensuring that governors have the skills, knowledge and accurate information to hold senior leaders rigorously to account for improving: the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement; the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe; and the management of finances
 - making sure that the pupil premium is used effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make at least good progress.

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly across Key Stages 1 to 4 so that it is at least good, in order that all groups of pupils' achievement in communication, reading, writing and mathematics is good or better, by making sure that:
 - all pupils receive their entitlement to the required number of hours taught by a teacher each week in relation to their age
 - a clear learning plan for timetabled daily activities is established so that learning time is not lost
 - all teachers' assessments of what pupils know and can do are accurate and that this information is always used well to plan and provide activities that challenge pupils of all abilities to make good progress, especially the most able
 - the quality of marking improves so that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve
 - the teaching of basic communication skills is strengthened and all staff always use the communication strategy identified for individual pupils.

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 use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders, including governors, have not taken the necessary steps to ensure that pupils across the school are kept safe and secure. They do not give adequate consideration to the particular vulnerability of the pupils attending the school when agreeing and adopting safeguarding policies and procedures. The designated leaders for safeguarding do not have the appropriate level of training or knowledge to carry out their roles effectively. Not all staff have received training to keep their safeguarding knowledge up-to-date. Some staff are unclear who undertakes the lead responsibility for safeguarding pupils.
- Leaders fail to take robust or swift action to deal with incidents that arise relating to keeping pupils safe; consequently risk is not minimised. Not all of the current strategies used to support those pupils who display challenging behaviour are safe or respect pupils' rights. The school's leadership has not fully explored alternative strategies in order to support the improvement in behaviour of these pupils more effectively. Although there is an agreed approach to physical intervention, including restraint, leaders do not ensure that all staff use the approach appropriately.
- The current policy for ensuring that staff, volunteers, frequent visitors and governors are suitable to work in school is not robust enough in light of the vulnerability of the pupils.
- Leaders and governors have failed to stop the significant decline in pupils' achievement. They have an inaccurate view of the school's effectiveness and, as a result, lack the ability to improve it quickly enough.
- Arrangements to measure and track pupils' attainment and progress are weak. Leaders do not have a good enough understanding of the rate of pupils' progress in comparison to similar pupils in other schools. This, along with inaccuracies in some teacher assessment information, significantly hampers leaders' ability to reach an accurate view of the school's performance. Leaders' view that pupils' achievement is outstanding, for example, is significantly over-generous. This inaccurate assessment means that plans for improving the school are not always appropriate.
- The decline in the quality of teaching since the last inspection reflects weak leadership of teaching over time. However, as a result of the work of the new headteacher, arrangements to check the quality of teaching are now starting to improve. Staff and governors are ambitious for pupils and are enthusiastic about new opportunities arising from recently-introduced education and health care plans. The headteacher has enlisted the support of other middle leaders, such as those responsible for leading key subjects. They too are now beginning to check the quality of teaching and review the progress pupils are making with greater rigour. The impact of this work is not yet evident, however.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Although the school has published a plan to ensure that it promotes equality of opportunity adequately, variation in the achievement of pupils, such as between key stages, shows that it is not yet fully successful. Weaknesses in the school's information about how well pupils, and groups of pupils, are achieving undermine leaders' efforts. The pupil premium is not used effectively enough to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. The school does not yet measure the impact of its spending of funds such as the pupil premium, or the Year 7 catch-up funding, on the achievement of pupils eligible for support.
- Pupils are provided with a very wide range of learning experiences. These focus strongly on developing pupils' personal and social skills that will prepare them well for their future lives in modern Britain. Visits abroad, along with lessons that encourage pupils to consider different faiths and British values, including by comparing the freedoms they enjoy in their own lives with those of others, all make an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The primary school sport and physical education funding is used appropriately to extend the range of after-school and lunchtime sports clubs. However, the impact on pupils' health and well-being and participation in sport is yet to be measured.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive the guidance they need to make well-informed choices about future work, education or training at the end of Year 11. They enlist the support of external specialists to offer advice. Vocational and practical courses for Year 11 pupils offered by alternative providers ensure that pupils are confident in their decision-making as to where they want to go when they leave school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils attending alternative placements are kept safe and make appropriate progress. Pupils are always accompanied by school staff in order that they have the support they need in this provision
- The local authority supported governors in the recruitment of the new headteacher. It has responded to

the requests from governors to provide specific training for special school governors. It does not, however, currently provide the school with any specific support.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is weak. It is not ensuring that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are adequate. Governors are not aware of the implications of the school's procedures for supporting pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. They have not fully considered how they are to guarantee the suitability of staff, volunteers and frequent school visitors.
- Over time, governance has failed to offer sufficient support, guidance and challenge to senior leaders to stop the decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors do not keep a close enough check on how well pupils are learning or hold leaders to account for making sure they receive timely information on the school's performance. Information about pupils' achievement in the 2012/13 school year, for example, was not presented to governors until June 2014. This delay, along with their lack of understanding of the information they are given, significantly hampers their ability to challenge and support the school.
- Governors' views of the performance of the school, including the quality of teaching, are inaccurate. Governors have given some consideration to making sure that any pay awards reflect the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. However, their ability to do so robustly or accurately is significantly undermined because of their inaccurate view of teacher performance.
- Governors do not ensure that funds such as the pupil premium are spent to good effect. They are unaware of the impact this funding has on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They have only recently been made aware of the significant financial difficulty the school may have faced by the end of 2015/16 without the restructuring proposed by the new headteacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents unreservedly agree with this view.
- Pupils move around school in an orderly manner. They are polite, sensitive and supportive of one another. Pupils were keen to inform inspectors about their happy and positive experiences in the school.
- Most, but not all, pupils demonstrate an eagerness to learn in lessons. Very occasionally, there is some very low-level disruption in lessons caused by a few pupils. Most staff manage this well to ensure that the pupils' learning is not held back.
- Recent changes to the lunch time arrangements introduced by the new headteacher have improved pupils' social experience. The pupils and staff sit together in groups and enjoy social conversations over healthy lunches.
- Pupils' arrival at the start of the day and their departure when school finishes are managed well. Pupils respond accordingly and behave well.
- The oldest pupils enjoy the day each week they spend at alternative placements in local further education colleges. They are supported well by school staff so feel safe and able to make positive choices about which college to attend when they leave school.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Attendance is higher than at most similar schools. The regular absence of some pupils is due to their complex medical issues. The school offers a range of support to pupils whose attendance is affected in this way.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure across the school is inadequate.
- Not all staff have received up-to-date and appropriate safeguarding training, including the designated person who leads the school on safeguarding matters. Staff do not always respond quickly and thoroughly enough to incidents impacting on pupils' safety. Actions to remove any risk to pupils are not swift enough.
- The current strategies used to support pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour do not ensure that pupils are always kept safe. The school's records showing how the behaviour of these pupils is managed raise concern about these pupils' safety. Although there is an agreed approach to physical intervention, including restraint, it is not always followed by staff. Interventions are not always appropriate.
- Records of pupils' behaviour, including incidents, are not reviewed frequently enough. Staff do not ensure that actions taken to address any issues help to bring about improved behaviour over time.
- Some pupils talk confidently about e-safety. A few older pupils who knew about the risks involved in smoking and taking drugs indicated that they would still consider using illegal substances if offered.

- Pupils acknowledge that occasionally bullying takes place. They know who to talk to if they are worried. Where appropriate, staff encourage the pupils to resolve any differences between themselves.
- Some staff do not intervene or plan well enough to tackle some pupils' inappropriate personal behaviour in a timely enough manner.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The good quality of teaching evident at the time of the last inspection has not been sustained. Teaching does not lead to pupils making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics over time across Key Stages 1 to 4; as a result, it requires improvement.
- Not all pupils receive their entitlement to the number of hours, appropriate to their age, that they are required to be taught by a qualified teacher each week. The organisation of the school day and the timetables for some classes mean that valuable learning time is sometimes lost. For example, learning time can be lost when pupils are required to wait while other pupils receive personal care or have their physical needs met. There is not always a clear learning plan for timetabled daily activities.
- Teachers' assessments showing what pupils already know and can do are not always accurate. In some cases, very accurate information is gathered using a good range of evidence. However, in other cases, assessments are made on more limited information. Inaccuracies in teachers' judgements have made it difficult for staff and leaders to track the pupils' progress accurately. Furthermore, not all teachers use the information from assessments to plan what their pupils need to learn next. This means that work is sometimes too hard for some pupils and too easy for others. Work provided does not always challenge pupils, especially the most able, to make rapid progress.
- The quality of marking is variable. Some pupils' work is marked in a way that enables pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. This helps them to make good progress. However, not all teachers mark pupils' work or offer them feedback; consequently pupils are not clear how well they are getting on and what they need to do to know or understand more.
- The teaching of basic communication skills requires improvement because it varies in quality. A range of communication strategies, including speech, signing, pictures and tablet computers, is used, and in many cases, staff do ensure that the most appropriate communication strategies are carefully identified in order to meet the particular needs of individual pupils. However, some staff do not always use the identified strategy and this hinders the development of communication skills for some pupils.
- The teaching of reading is starting to improve. Good encouragement for pupils to read often from a wider range of materials is helping to speed up pupils' progress. Even so, the rate of progress is still not consistently good; sometimes, the books pupils read lack challenge.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable across the school and requires improvement. By the end of Year 11, some pupils achieve Entry Level 1, 2 or 3 or GCSE mathematics up to grade D. However, pupils' books show that they often get all of their mathematical work right first time. The work provided lacks the necessary challenge to ensure that the progress pupils make is consistently good.
- Some teaching results in pupils learning well in lessons, especially when the teachers identify precisely what the pupils need to learn to achieve their next step. In these lessons, pupils' responses to teachers' skilful questioning are carefully recorded. This information is then used effectively to adapt pupils' future learning so that they can learn better and make more progress.
- Teaching assistants work effectively when teachers plan the use of their time well. Some teaching assistants provide a very high level of support to make sure individual pupils' physical and personal care needs are met. Not all teaching assistants work to the same high standards in all classes.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has declined and now requires improvement. Over time, from their individual starting points, too few pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 to 4.
- After a strong start to their education in the early years, due to good teaching and effective support, the good rate of progress is not maintained.
- Although most pupils make good progress in their social and personal development during their time in school, their achievement in reading and writing and communication requires improvement. Pupils are not given work that enables them to build well enough on what they already know and can do. Although a wider range of appropriate reading materials is now provided, and specialist resources, such as a

multisensory library are available, they are not always used to good effect. Year 7 pupils who read to the inspector were keen and confident readers. Although most pupils read often, the books that some pupils are given to read sometimes lack challenge.

- Progress in mathematics requires improvement because teaching is not consistently good. In 2014, pupils made better progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 than in Key Stages 1 and 2, as seen in the number of pupils reaching Entry Level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications in Year 11 in 2014. In Key Stages 1 and 2, however, progress in mathematics is slower. Teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils requires improvement. In Year 11 in 2014, a small number of pupils succeeded in gaining either five GCSEs at A* to G grades or at least one GCSE. Considering pupils' very low starting points, this represents good progress for some. However, work provided for the most-able across the school sometimes lacks challenge and these pupils are not always stretched to achieve well.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar, and sometimes better, progress than others in the school. However, progress varies between year groups and subjects due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. No information about the attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 11 in 2014 in comparison to others was made available for inspectors to review.
- The school is not clear enough about how well different groups of pupils achieve, including in different year groups and different subjects. Systems for demonstrating the rate of progress pupils are making over time are under-developed. This prevents leaders from identifying and targeting additional support where it is needed most.
- At the end of Year 11, most pupils achieve externally accredited awards in a range of functional and life skills. The skills the pupils learn help to prepare them for the next stage in their education.
- Year 11 pupils achieve well at the alternative placements they attend. Approximately half of the pupils achieved a Level 1 award in Building and Construction in 2014.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- The concerns about the leadership of safeguarding across the school mean that the inspectors cannot be confident that the same concerns do not exist in the early years provision.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their very low starting points. This is as a result of good teaching based on the staff's detailed knowledge of each child.
- Activities provided closely match the varying learning needs of children. Staff track and record small steps in the children's progress and use these to plan for children's next stages in learning.
- Relationships between staff and children are good. Staff gain the confidence and trust of parents successfully; as a result, children attend regularly, settle well into school life through a gradual transition and most learn how to behave well.
- The early years leader makes sure that on a day-to-day basis the children's medical and first aid needs are met well. The leader also ensures that staff's good knowledge of what children already know and can do is used effectively to ensure that teaching meets children's individual needs. Staff have a good knowledge of how well children are learning and know where learning can improve further.
- The children's emotional well-being is supported well. When the children become distressed the staff use a range of positive strategies very effectively so the children calm quickly.

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	134865
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	448156

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	3–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Leybourne
Headteacher	Jane Grecic
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2009
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