

Oakfield Lodge School

Warmington Road, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 4PP

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- On occasion, a small minority of pupils disrupt the learning of their classmates and other pupils around school.
- Although attendance is rapidly improving, it is still not good enough. A minority of parents fail in their duty to make sure that their children attend school on a regular basis.
- The overall quality of teaching is not consistently good. Although pupils now make expected progress across the curriculum, progress is not rapid enough for them to catch up with their peers. As a result, standards are too low.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. As a result, pupils do not complete as much work as they could during lessons, the presentation of their work is too often untidy and work is all too frequently unfinished.
- Too many opportunities are missed to allow pupils to work independently. Pupils are overly reliant on adult support and are not taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Subject teachers have not kept up to date in their practice. Too few opportunities to develop their subject knowledge and learn from expert colleagues in other schools are limiting the school's capacity to further improve the quality of teaching.
- Whilst the interim executive board has appointed a permanent headteacher, too many members of staff are on short-term contracts.
- The temporary premises and facilities are not suitable to meet the needs of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Rapid improvements have been secured since the appointment of the interim executive board and the headteacher.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved. Pupils are achieving more qualifications by the end of Year 11 and a number of pupils have successfully reintegrated into schools.
- Pupils are safe and well-cared-for. They value the good relationships they have with staff and each other.
- Pupils' progress has improved as a result of the actions of senior leaders and teachers. Pupils now make expected progress in most subjects.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that all pupils make much better progress so that they rapidly catch up with their peers, by:
 - providing appropriate, high-quality training for all staff to ensure that they increase their subject knowledge and are up to date with current practice so that they more effectively engage pupils in learning
 - supporting pupils to rapidly secure the key characteristics of effective learning including engagement, motivation and critical thinking
 - giving pupils more opportunities to investigate and solve problems, think for themselves and write at length
 - making sure that lessons are pacy and challenging so that they engage and stretch pupils
 - ensuring that pupils quickly grasp the higher order reading skills required to access a wide range of more challenging texts
 - using information from assessments of pupils on entry to set milestones for the development of their skills , knowledge and understanding across all subjects so that they rapidly close the gaps with their peers
 - setting targets with pupils so that they know what they need to do next
 - frequently reviewing progress with pupils so they know how well they are doing and what they need to improve
 - setting high expectations of what pupils must achieve by the end of each lesson
 - establishing consistently high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work
 - making sure that pupils always complete their work.

- Urgently address the disruptive behaviour of a small minority of pupils so that classrooms are orderly and pupils' learning is not disrupted.

- Improve leadership and management at all levels, by:
 - ensuring that the interim executive board and school leaders maintain the urgency with which they are addressing areas for improvement
 - providing high quality professional development for all staff which ensures that they have secure subject knowledge, are up to date with current practice and have an ongoing professional relationship with outstanding departments in local schools
 - developing the skills and expertise of teachers so that they can provide credible, confident and effective subject leadership
 - securing a permanent staff team with the skills and experience required to rapidly raise standards across school as a matter of urgency
 - moving forward quickly on plans to provide accommodation and facilities which are fit for purpose
 - not allowing the move to becoming an academy to distract from rapidly improving provision for pupils
 - making sure that the school's website meets statutory requirements.

- Reduce the rate of persistent absenteeism, by:
 - improving relationships still further with the small minority of parents who do not send their children

to school regularly

- using all the powers at school leaders' disposal to encourage parents to help their children by improving attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Previous leaders and the management committee did not tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report with sufficient urgency. As a result, the provision offered by the school has not improved as quickly as it should.
- Leaders have not ensured that teaching across school is good enough for pupils to make the accelerated progress needed to catch up with their peers.
- Not all training provided for staff is focused sharply enough. Aspects of the training programme are good and have had a positive impact. However, given the school's focus on improving teaching and learning, not enough has been done to ensure that subject teachers are up to date in their practice.
- Not enough thought has been given to the critical role that each of the teachers has to play in the leadership of their subject. As a result, teachers lack the skills and experience needed to improve performance in their subject.
- The appointment of an interim executive board and permanent headteacher has given the school a new lease of life. The strong alliance of the interim executive board, local authority and headteacher has brought about rapid improvements in a relatively short amount of time. However, it is too early for the full impact of these changes to be seen.
- The experience and expertise of the members of the interim executive board have enabled them to quickly take the reins. They have accurately prioritised what needs to be done to secure the necessary rapid improvements. Since May 2015 they have worked tirelessly to address the actions arising from the previous inspection report.
- The interim executive board has stabilised the school through their appointment of a permanent headteacher. They are making sure that he is well equipped to lead the school forward, for example by working closely with the local authority to secure more suitable accommodation.
- The interim executive board and headteacher have together provided resolute and aspirational leadership. They are successfully bringing about a shift in the culture and ethos of the school. Everyone is in no doubt that this school has learning at its heart. Leaders have not shied away from difficult decisions in their quest to secure the best possible outcomes for their pupils.
- The headteacher has sought external support to help him check the accuracy of his judgements on the quality of provision. The headteacher and interim executive board have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have precisely pinpointed the priorities to drive forward improvement.
- Leaders have strengthened performance management processes. Targets are now set for teachers which link directly to the progress of the pupils in their classes. However, targets are not sufficiently ambitious if pupils are to catch up with their peers nationally.
- The headteacher has developed the curriculum. He has balanced the need to engage pupils in learning with providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to move on successfully from the school.
- Leaders recognise the constraints of their accommodation and staffing. They have been creative in broadening the curriculum through their thoughtful selection of alternative providers who are able to complement the school's own provision. Moreover, the curriculum provides all pupils with opportunities to develop good habits, such as regular exercise, which will stand them in good stead for life. While pupils have the opportunity to elect school councillors who have a voice in the reward trips planned, more could be done to develop the role of pupil leadership.
- Pupils have access to greater opportunities to develop personally, spiritually, morally and socially. Leaders have achieved this through the blend of form time, assemblies, enrichment activities, one-to-one intervention, and carefully selected topics in lessons such as English. During the inspection, pupils were debating who they would rather have dinner with, Adolf Hitler or Nelson Mandela. Pupils were keen to share what they knew about these two historical figures and engaged in a lively debate with the teacher.
- The school's performance is improving. Outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 11 in 2015 were better than the year before as examination results improved and almost all Year 11 pupils moved on to education, training or employment. Current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability, are making at least expected progress across the curriculum and a number of pupils have successfully moved on to long term educational placements. Although provision in

mathematics has been developed for the most-able pupils, leaders are not doing enough to make sure that this group of pupils are sufficiently challenged to achieve the higher grades in GCSE examinations.

- The school is currently addressing the challenge of an influx of new pupils. Well-developed transition arrangements ensure that staff have comprehensive information about each new pupil. The experienced outreach workers liaise closely with families, securing good lines of communication between home and school. Thorough assessments on entry ensure that staff can put in place plans to address each pupil's individual needs.
- A high proportion of pupils joining the school are identified as having complex needs which require the support of an education, health and care plan. The special educational needs coordinator is tenacious in securing the appropriate provision for those pupils who require a specialist placement to meet their needs.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The interim executive board is a strength of the school. Board members bring a wide range of experience and expertise which they are using to get the school back on its feet. Since their appointment they have wasted no time in tackling the issues which have been dragging the school down. However, they recognise that many challenges lie ahead which need to be faced if the school is to improve.
 - The interim executive board has quickly established an accurate view of the school. Members have taken their responsibilities seriously, many of them working alongside school leaders to drive forward improvements.
 - The interim executive board has not shied away from taking the tough decisions needed if pupils are to be successful.
 - The interim executive board is not prepared to accept second best and has high expectations of senior leaders. It is systematic in its approach to tackling the school's underperformance and as a result has made a visible difference in a relatively short amount of time.
 - The positive partnership with the local authority is helping the board to get finances under control, secure a suitable building and put in place a long term plan for the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding and promoting pupils' well-being are very much at the heart of the school's work. The school's systems are rigorous and robust, ensuring all concerns are tenaciously followed up. The school has developed good relationships with external agencies to ensure that support for pupils is well coordinated. Pupils and their families value the help they receive from the school. Pupils are confident that they are safe and well-cared-for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Despite leaders having made some improvements to the quality of teaching since the last inspection, it is not strong enough across all subjects, such as science and computing, to secure good progress for pupils.
- Although teaching is stronger in mathematics and English, teachers have not had access to high-quality subject-specific training which ensures that they are up to date with current practice. As a result, pupils do not make the accelerated progress needed to close the gaps to their peers.
- Teaching assistants who support pupils in class or as part of one-to-one interventions do not always have the subject knowledge to ensure that they can provide effective academic support which helps pupils' learning move forward rapidly. As a result, too often, support staff focus on pupils' behaviour rather than their learning.
- While the school carries out a range of assessments when pupils join the school, this information is not used to identify key milestones which need to be met to help leaders and teachers ensure that pupils make the necessary gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding to rapidly close the gaps with their peers.
- Targets are not set for pupils' learning so they are not always clear about what they need to do to make progress and it is hard for them to measure how successful they have been.
- There are too many missed opportunities, when starting new topics, to find out what pupils already know and what they would like to find out to increase their engagement in learning.
- Pupils are not sufficiently challenged to deepen their understanding. Too often, adults step in to help before pupils have had a chance to try to work things out for themselves. Pupils have very few opportunities to develop their thinking and reasoning in mathematics or to develop their mastery of language through writing at length in English.
- The pace of learning in lessons is too leisurely. Teachers do not make clear what they expect pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson and as a result the pace of learning is too slow.

- The quality of pupils' work is inconsistent. The standards of presentation, neatness of handwriting and the amount of work completed varies between lessons and across subjects.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the curriculum. Leaders have put in place expectations around planning, marking and assessment which are strengthening practice. The quality of marking and feedback is best demonstrated in English and mathematics books. However, there is too little evidence that pupils are taking notice of advice since, often, similar errors occur later in the books.
- The half-termly assessments are helping teachers to track pupils' progress. In mathematics, the teacher is using the tests to identify gaps in pupils' learning. While teachers are getting to grips with this new system it is important that leaders ensure that the reliability of the data is thoroughly checked to ensure the information is accurate.
- In mathematics, the teacher's subject knowledge ensures that tasks match pupils' needs. He provides clear explanations which help pupils understand new concepts and techniques. The teacher encourages pupils to use the correct mathematical language, modelling the use of technical vocabulary. Marking helps pupils to know how well they are doing.
- In English, there is evidence of redrafting of work and correcting spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Moreover, the teacher is choosing topics which capture pupils' interest. During the inspection, pupils were writing letters using information they had been given about the 'Jack the Ripper' killings.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have more opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Daily 'Drop Everything and Read' sessions provide an opportunity for all pupils to read. However, there is a need for all teachers to be trained to plan and deliver guided reading sessions to enable pupils to access a wider range of more challenging texts and develop higher order reading skills if it is going to have a positive impact on pupils' literacy skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- While pupils' attendance has improved, too few pupils are sufficiently well motivated to be successful in their lessons. Too often, teachers and support staff are spending lesson time cajoling pupils to get on with their work. Pupils often take too long to settle to their work, are easily distracted and fail to complete the tasks set.
- Pupils lack pride in their work which is all too often untidy. Although pupils are aware of the expectations for the presentation of their work, pupils' books are scribbled on, dates and learning objectives are not always set out and handwriting is often untidy. Too many pieces of work are unfinished.
- Pupils are overly reliant on adults to make sure that they move quickly between lessons and make sure they have the equipment they need to take part in the lessons.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils at the school have a chequered history of education. For many of the pupils, their improved attendance, compliance in wearing the school uniform and participation in lessons are testament to the hard work of staff to secure their re-engagement in education.
- Pupils get on well with each other. Pupils are clear that derisive and derogatory remarks are rare. Pupils and staff agree that everyone treats each other with tolerance and respect regardless of their ethnicity, sexuality, faith or disability. Any rare issues which occur are quickly nipped in the bud.
- Pupils spoke politely to inspectors during their visit, treating them with courtesy and respect.
- During the inspection, pupils playing football and pool at lunchtime ensured that the games were fair and everyone who wanted to was able to take part. Teachers used these opportunities well to build relationships, model behaviours and talk through any concerns.
- Although the school has only been on the site for four months, staff have worked hard to take ownership of the space. The new signage and banners give the school a real sense of identity. The classrooms and shared areas are well-cared-for.
- Although no parents responded to the online survey, the inspector did speak to two parents who were extremely positive about the provision offered by the school. They both talked about the positive impact that attending the school had had on their children. The parents valued the comprehensive information the school provides on an almost daily basis about how well their children are getting on.
- The school keeps a close eye on the pupils attending alternative provision. The member of staff responsible visits pupils weekly to ensure that the provision is meeting the needs of the pupils and they are fully

engaging with the offer. All pupils work towards their mathematics and English GCSEs as part of their curriculum. Almost all of the pupils attending alternative provision have improved their attendance and behaviour. One of the inspectors visited pupils at an off-site provision. The pupils he met were polite and welcoming. They were keen to share their views on the off-site provision. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their experiences. They asserted that mathematics and English were well taught, the curriculum was preparing them well for the next stage in their education and training and they felt safe and well-cared-for.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- All the pupils who attend the school have been permanently excluded or are at high risk of permanent exclusion from their previous schools. Many pupils have not attended school regularly prior to starting at Oakfield Lodge and all of them have a history of very challenging behaviour.
- On occasion, a small minority of pupils disrupt the learning of their peers. These interruptions to lessons impact on the good order of classrooms, slowing the progress of pupils.
- The levels of fixed-period exclusions and recorded behaviour incidents have not reduced this year. However, this is with good reason. Leaders have put in place a number of changes, such as the longer school day and a new behaviour policy which raises expectations – which have not been well received by some of the pupils. These have led to an increase in the number of reported incidents. Records show that these increases have been short lived as a result of the consistent adherence to the policy by staff.
- The new behaviour policy is starting to improve behaviour day-to-day as pupils understand the 'ladder of rewards' and 'ladder of consequences'. Pupils are well motivated by the reward trips and visits which are planned by the school council. Staff feel well supported by senior leaders and their colleagues when pupils challenge their application of the policy.
- Pupils' attendance, while showing marked improvement this year, still remains well below the national average. Leaders have ensured that there are well-developed systems to follow up on all unexplained pupil absences. Most pupils value the second chance the school has given them and make sure they come to school regularly. A significant number of pupils had exceptionally high rates of absence prior to joining the school and almost all of them have greatly improved levels of attendance. Leaders recognise that further action needs to be taken to eliminate the instances of persistent absence.
- Most pupils respond quickly to teacher instructions and are keen to make good choices. Staff apply the new behaviour policy consistently and pupils know that there will be consequences if they break the school rules. Staff feel well supported by leaders when addressing challenging behaviour.
- Although there have been no permanent exclusions, the number of fixed-period exclusions has increased this year as the headteacher has taken a tough stance on physical assaults by pupils on members of staff. Records show that these incidents involve a small minority of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Although outcomes for pupils improved considerably in 2015 and the progress of current pupils is improving, low academic standards are a significant cause for concern. Not enough pupils are achieving GCSE passes in the subjects they are studying and too few of the most-able pupils achieve the higher grades at GCSE.
- On starting at the school, pupils' attainment is well below that expected for their age. Moreover, as most pupils join during Key Stage 4 there is limited time for the pupils to make up the ground. Staff quickly assess pupils' levels of attainment on entry so that work can be set which matches pupils' ability. Moreover, they prioritise establishing relationships so that they can rebuild pupils' self-confidence to help them to re-engage with learning.
- Current pupils make expected progress across most subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The half-termly assessments show that the proportions of pupils making at least expected progress has improved since the beginning of the academic year. However, pupils are not making the accelerated progress required to catch up with their peers. As a result, at the end of Year 11 outcomes for pupils are well below the national average.
- The school helps many of its pupils overcome considerable barriers: academically, socially, emotionally and behaviourally, to start to get their education back on track. Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 are improving as a result of the positive impact of changes leaders have put in place. In 2015, over a third of pupils achieved at least 5 A* to G passes at GCSE and the overall average points score for the cohort was

more than double that of the previous year.

- The school makes sure that all pupils work towards GCSE qualifications in mathematics and English. Key Stage 4 pupils have individual learning programmes and leaders ensure that all courses lead to recognised qualifications. Despite the short amount of time the pupils follow these courses, there are many success stories; for example, all of the Year 11 pupils who studied science last year achieved a grade A* to G pass at GCSE. Moreover, the pupils also work towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a first aid qualification and ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) awards.
- From their different starting points, pupils make expected progress in mathematics. Despite most pupils joining the school during Key Stage 4 with large gaps in their learning in mathematics, in 2015 all pupils gained a qualification in mathematics. The mathematics teacher is currently delivering an additional higher mathematics course for the most able Year 10 pupils which will stand them in good stead to secure higher grades at GCSE.
- Pupils are often reluctant readers and writers when they start at this school. Many pupils have poorly developed handwriting, make basic errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling and find it hard to organise their writing. The teacher ensures that pupils make steady progress at the school, re-engaging them with literacy through topics which capture pupils' interests and providing feedback which builds pupils' confidence. During the inspection, the teacher used video clips and newspaper articles about the 'Jack the Ripper' killings to gain and maintain pupils' interest as they wrote letters based on the events. Despite their low starting points and limited time at the school the overwhelming majority of pupils achieved a grade A* to G pass at English GCSE in 2015, which represents an improvement on previous years.
- The introduction of half-termly assessments has enabled leaders to monitor the achievement of individual pupils, cohorts, groups and subjects. Leaders are using this information to hold teachers to account for the achievement of their pupils. Frequent pupil progress meetings enable staff to identify pupils who are falling behind and plan actions to help them get back on track. Staff and leaders recognise that, although the assessment tool has been very useful in gaining an accurate view of how well pupils are getting on, further refinements are required if it is to provide the range of information leaders and teachers need.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs or disability achieve in line with their peers in school although well below their peers nationally.
- In the short time that the pupils attend, the school ensures that pupils are given useful information and guidance in the next stages in their lives. The bespoke learning programmes for each pupil provide them with access to a range of qualifications, work experience and enrichment activities which help pupils get back on track following their exclusions. Last year all the pupils, with one exception, moved onto college courses, apprenticeships or employment.
- Already this year a number of pupils have been successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools or have moved onto specialist provision. The school is committed to ensuring that its provision is short stay and that most pupils move onto other schools.

School details

Unique reference number	136676
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10008154

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Dr Harry Ziman
Headteacher	Mr Paul Lyons
Telephone number	01270 685626
Website	www.cheshireeastpru.co.uk
Email address	admin@oakfieldlodge.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school moved to a new site in November 2015. This accommodation is a temporary arrangement until the new building is completed.
- An interim executive board replaced the governing body in May 2015.
- An interim headteacher was appointed in September 2015. The headteacher has now secured the permanent post.
- Plans to convert to an academy are well developed. A sponsor has been approved. The proposed date for conversion is 1 September 2016.
- The school caters for boys and girls who have been permanently excluded from school or who are on the verge of permanent exclusion. The majority of pupils arrive during Key Stage 4.
- A very small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan. A number of pupils are in the process of assessment for a plan.
- A high proportion of staff are on temporary contracts or on supply. The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium is well above the national average. A very small number are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- A number of alternative providers are used to complement the education provided by the school: Trade Skills, The Fermain Academy, Changing Education and Cheshire East Council.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders.
- Inspectors observed a selection of lessons across the school.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work during visits to classrooms, scrutinised samples of pupils' work displayed on walls around the school and also looked at a selection of books with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed behaviour around the school, including observing pupils as they arrived at school, during break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation provided by the school including self-evaluation by leaders, the school's raising attainment plan, information on attendance, documents used to record behaviour and safeguarding concerns, information relating to pupils' progress, the school's performance management records, a report written by an external consultant and minutes of meetings of the interim executive board.
- An inspector visited one of the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors met with members of the interim executive board and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff, a group of pupils, spoke to two parents by telephone and took account of responses by five adults to the Ofsted questionnaire.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector
Derek Kitchin

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

