

# Great Yarmouth (VA) High School

Salisbury Road, Great Yarmouth NR30 4LS

## Inspection dates

12–13 April 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Pupils' attainment has been very low in recent years and shows little sign of improving.
- Pupils experience poor teaching in many of their lessons. When this occurs, pupils make little or no progress and produce work of a low quality.
- Pupils do not routinely adopt positive attitudes to their learning. Lessons are frequently disrupted by pupils' poor behaviour.
- There is no senior leader with responsibility for coordinating the school's work to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress.
- In the past senior leaders have had an over-generous view of the quality of education provided by the school.
- The roles of leaders at all levels are not defined clearly enough. As a result, many leaders are not sufficiently accountable for pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching.
- Assessments of pupils' progress is not accurate enough. Leaders have little confidence in the information that teachers provide.
- Pupils' attendance is well below national expectations.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly identified the challenges facing the school and has acted decisively to start to tackle them.
- Vulnerable pupils are well supported by the school's non-teaching staff.
- Some teaching is good. Where this occurs, pupils make good progress.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective.
- The interim executive board has accelerated school improvement since January 2016.

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, 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.

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

#### ■ Improve pupils' outcomes by:

- ensuring that leaders at all levels raise their expectations of the quality of teaching
- raising pupils' expectations of what they can achieve
- ensuring that pupils have ambitious targets that they understand and can realistically work towards
- making better use of the school's reading scheme and its curricular time
- tracking the progress of all groups of pupils
- ensuring that the work that pupils do in Year 7 builds on, and does not repeat, that already done in primary schools.

#### ■ Improve the quality of teaching so that:

- all lessons start on time
- teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are raised
- teachers follow the school's policies on providing feedback for pupils
- assessments of pupils' work are accurate.

#### ■ Improve pupils' behaviour by:

- raising levels of attendance
- ensuring that the school's behaviour policy is consistently applied and that lessons are rarely disrupted
- reducing the rates of exclusion
- ensuring that teachers' behaviour management skills are effective
- ensuring that all pupils get to the start of lessons promptly.

#### ■ Improve the quality of leadership and management by:

- making the improvement of attendance a priority
- checking more rigorously on the quality of teaching
- precisely defining the roles and responsibilities of leaders at all levels
- having a leadership role that is accountable oversight of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- ensuring that heads of department are accountable for pupils' outcomes within their subjects
- making better use of the good teaching within the school to support improvement
- seeking out, and learning from, good practice in successful schools.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Senior leaders have failed to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in recent years. Their evaluation of the school's effectiveness has been overly positive and this has contributed to a culture of low expectations and underachievement.
- The current headteacher, in post for a matter of weeks, has been quick to assess the main issues around the quality of teaching and standard of behaviour. He has taken swift action to improve things and there are already signs of success. There is, however, a long way to go before the school provides an adequate quality of education.
- Leaders are too tolerant of poor teaching and have not acted quickly enough to ensure that all teachers reach a basic minimum standard. Where weak teaching has been identified, leaders delegated responsibility to department heads but have not then checked that things are improving. An example of the consequences of this is that, despite identifying weak teaching in the autumn term, no effective action has been taken to tackle the issues. As a result, pupils continue to receive very poor teaching.
- Department leaders do not have a consistent view of their role. This is because it has not been defined clearly enough in the past and this has led to variability across departments. Some of these leaders are active in checking the quality of teaching, while others do very little. Too few professional development opportunities have been provided for these teachers to develop their skills, and too little time has been devoted to meeting as a group to share good practice and ensure consistency of policy. The outcome of this is that departments are behaving quite independently of one another. Pupils are aware of this and report that there are different approaches to teaching, homework, marking and behaviour across the school.
- Systems to manage the performance of teachers are weak. Teachers say that the approach has been 'hit and miss' in recent times and that changes in leadership have interrupted the processes. Teachers have not, therefore, been systematically held to account for their performance.
- The absence of a school leader to coordinate the school's work for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is preventing senior leaders evaluating the impact on pupil's achievement.
- The curriculum is not well organised by senior leaders and heads of department. Leaders have opted to replace some GCSE courses with work-related alternatives at GCSE equivalence. Key stage 4 now begins in Year 9. This is intended to spread the coverage of the GCSE course content. In science, however, where course content is considerable, teachers have been instructed to teach areas that will interest and enthuse Year 9 pupils about science. As a result, not all the requirements of the syllabus have been covered in sufficient detail in order to promote better examination outcomes.
- Leaders have not developed an overview of the curriculum to ensure that British values are being promoted across the range of subjects.
- The curriculum has been enriched by residential trips and visits. Heads of department report that the frequency of such events has declined following a staffing restructure. Pupils comment that they like the visits, and that the clubs that are available are popular.
- The school does not promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well enough. Pupils report that too little is done to integrate the different ethnic groups within the school community, although a good deal of work is done in the community itself through outreach work. Pupils' behaviour towards one another is not good enough, and the incidence of casual name-calling is too high. In corridors, pupils are too loud, creating an unwelcoming social environment.
- The new headteacher has accounted for the spending of the additional funding for the pupil premium grant. Previously, there was no breakdown as to how the significant amount of funding was being spent, or an assessment of its impact.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - was altered recently when an interim executive board replaced the governing body. This was done in recognition of the challenges that the school was facing in terms of falling outcomes, which were exacerbated by the exceptionally high number of exclusions.
  - has appraised the school's current situation and acted to appoint a new (interim) headteacher. They secured the services of an experienced candidate with a proven track record of leading successful

schools.

- has a very clear understanding of the school's weaknesses and where its strengths lie. This is based on first-hand evidence gathered in school, and from working closely alongside the new headteacher.
- has worked closely with the new headteacher to set a secure budget for the school going forward. This is in response to an inherited budget which saw the school moving towards a significant deficit in the near future.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policy and procedures meet requirement and clear systems are in place to make sure that pre-employment checks are made for new staff. Training is up to date and records are well organised. The most vulnerable pupils are well known to school staff.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**is inadequate**

- Pupils do not make good enough progress in some subjects because of poor teaching.
- Where teaching is inadequate, pupils behave poorly, do little work and are disrespectful towards their peers and teachers. A scrutiny of work over time in these classrooms shows little progress, careless and unfinished work and an absence of any guidance on how to improve.
- Some teachers have very low expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. As a result, they provide work that is unchallenging and are unsurprised when pupils do little. In many lessons that inspectors visited, including those in Year 11 where important examinations are very close, there was no sense of urgency about the lessons: casual chatting was accepted and, in a small number of cases, prompted and encouraged by the teacher.
- The school's policy for providing pupils with feedback is inconsistently applied across the school. Some teachers provide regular and helpful feedback, in line with the school's expectations. Others, however, do not follow the school's policy for marking and rarely mark pupils' work and only do so when leaders give them deadlines to do so. In the mathematics department, for example, some books were seen which have barely been marked over a term. Pupils confirmed that the feedback that they receive is wholly dependent on the 'luck of the draw' in terms of which teacher they get.
- Assessment is not rigorous enough. Pupils' progress is tracked by a monitoring system but leaders have little faith in the accuracy of the information that they receive – especially at key stage 3. Inspectors agreed with leaders, having found examples of pupils' work that was very different from the assessments that teachers had produced. In some cases, pupils have been given very low GCSE target grades when their actual work represents a much higher standard. In other cases, pupils have been over-assessed by their teachers. This masks underachievement and prevents leaders from gaining a precise understanding of how effective teaching is.
- Some teaching is much better than this. Inspectors saw pupils' work that demonstrated good progress over time. In these classrooms pupils were very positive about their work and enjoyed the learning. This good teaching is not solely located in specific departments but is spread around the range of subjects. There was, however, clear evidence of good teaching in geography, history, physical education (PE), religious education (RE), art, drama and English. The good practice in these classrooms is not being used effectively enough to raise the quality of teaching across the school.
- Vulnerable pupils, and those requiring additional help, are well catered for in the support centre. Here, a team of committed and effective non-teaching staff provide good support for pupils who are either at the early stages of speaking English or find learning in mainstream lessons very challenging.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**is inadequate**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- The attitudes of a significant proportion of pupils to their learning are poor. These pupils do not understand how they can contribute to gaining a good-quality education, and enjoying the benefits that this will bring. They have very low expectations of what they can achieve. This is apparent in many classrooms where pupils were reluctant to invest any energy or commit to working hard.
- In stark contrast with this, inspectors spoke with pupils who were very keen to work hard and achieve well. Some of these pupils voiced frustration at the poor attitudes of their classmates. One pupil told an inspector that 'all of my lessons in one subject are disrupted. This means that I don't learn enough and

this subject is important to me so I have to try to learn on my own at home instead.'

- Pupils have mixed views on bullying. Most spoken to had confidence that staff will tackle it and make things better. However, some of the same pupils told inspectors that they had been bullied, chiefly through name-calling, but that they simply did not want to report it. All pupils spoken with understood how bullying can take different forms.
- Although most pupils reported that they feel safe in school, some find the behaviour of a small number of pupils worrying, especially when fights break out. This has been much less common of late but remains something that concerns younger pupils.
- Pupils' welfare is supported effectively by a full-time counsellor and a team of support staff. The school works effectively with outside agencies to support an extremely high proportion of pupils in coping with the challenges that they face.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- The rate of exclusion is very high. In the recent past, prior to a change in school policy, the rate was exceptionally high.
- Too many lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that all of their lessons in some subjects are disrupted by the behaviour of a small number of pupils. In lessons, inspectors observed pupils openly defying teachers, answering back, refusing to work and leaving classrooms when they chose to. Pupils told inspectors that this was typical.
- Too many pupils arrive late to lessons. Between lessons and at the end of breaktimes, several pupils hang around in corridors, chatting and wasting time rather than hurrying to their next lesson. This is exacerbated by the school canteen continuing to serve food after the bell has sounded for the next lesson.
- Pupils' attendance has declined after a period of considerable improvement during 2014/15. It is now very low and too little is being done to promote improvements.
- A significant proportion of staff and parents who responded to questionnaires have concerns about behaviour in the school.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are inadequate**

- The proportion of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has been very low for the past two years. The school's own predictions, which have not been consistently accurate in the past, indicate that this is not set to change in 2016.
- From exceptionally low starting points, the proportion of pupils who made expected progress in both mathematics and English was below the national level in 2015. This picture is set to continue in 2016.
- The proportions of pupils who made more than expected progress in mathematics and English was broadly in line with national levels in 2015. This is likely to remain the case in 2016 in English but not in mathematics, where significantly fewer pupils will exceed expectations.
- The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally widened in 2015, in both English and mathematics. This gap is equivalent to one GCSE grade. The school's assessment data indicates that this will not change in 2016, although leaders are not fully confident in the accuracy of the assessment information that they are dealing with.
- The tracking of progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is weak. In 2015, this group of pupils accounted for just over half of the overall cohort and their attainment was above that of similar pupils nationally. In 2016, the absence of precise tracking information means that leaders cannot predict accurately how well this group will do in Year 11 or in other year groups.
- Pupils are making inconsistent progress across a range of subjects. In the humanities, pupils' work over time indicates that good progress is occurring in several year groups. In English, especially in Years 10 and 11, there are also signs of good progress. In contrast, inspectors found little evidence of progress in far too many pupils' science books. In some cases, work was of an exceptionally poor standard, and basic errors had been marked as correct. Similarly, progress was difficult to find in some mathematics books where, for example, Year 9 pupils are doing the same work as Year 7 pupils because they have not mastered basic skills expected of younger pupils.
- The most-able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged. Pupils told inspectors that they had not learned anything new in mathematics during Year 7 while they waited for other pupils to catch up with

them. In a work scrutiny of the most-able pupils currently in Year 7, it was clear that the quality of pupils' writing has declined since they started at the school in September 2015. The standard of grammar, punctuation, style and presentation has regressed for too many pupils because teachers' expectations of what they are able to achieve are much too low.

- Pupils in Year 7 have a 30-minute 'silent reading' lesson each day. This lesson takes place within a range of subjects so it may be, for example, in mathematics on a Tuesday and in science on a Wednesday. During the silent reading lessons that inspectors observed, some pupils read with interest while others did very little. The books that pupils were reading were sometimes not matched to their reading ability. The teacher in the room made no attempt to support the teaching of reading. This is an expensive waste of teaching time. The school's own data indicates that a significant proportion of pupils are either making no progress or are regressing.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121219
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10011844

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	873
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	John Catton
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Robson
<b>Telephone number</b>	01493 842 061
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.greatyarmouth.norfolk.sch.uk">www.greatyarmouth.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@gyhsadmin.co.uk">office@gyhsadmin.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 June 2014

## Information about this school

- The substantive headteacher left the school during the spring term of 2015. An interim headteacher was appointed in May 2015 and left in January 2016. The current headteacher joined the school just before half term in February 2016.
- The delegated powers of the governing body were removed in January 2016. At this point, the governing body was replaced by an interim executive board.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is significantly greater than the national average. This is government funding intended to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Around one quarter of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Just over one in five pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average.
- The school does not meet the current floor standards. These are the minimum standards set by the government.
- The school does not provide any off-site training.
- The school is currently engaged in a process to consider conversion to academy status.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was unannounced. It was scheduled because of concerns that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector had about the decline in pupil outcomes and the high level of exclusions.
- Inspectors observed learning in 31 lessons or parts of lessons.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, two members of the interim executive board, departmental leaders and recently qualified teachers, to discuss their work. They also met with pupils formally and informally to discuss their experiences in the school.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), 36 staff responses and 15 pupils' responses. They also took account of questionnaires that the school has previously issued.
- Inspectors spent time observing pupils' behaviour in and around the school, at lunchtimes, tutor times, at the start of the day and during transition between lessons.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's documentation, including self-evaluation records, improvement planning, assessment information, minutes of governors' meetings, and safeguarding systems and records.

## Inspection team

Chris Moodie, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Lucas	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Hood	Ofsted Inspector
David Hutton	Ofsted Inspector



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