

West Gate School

Glenfield Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE3 6DG

Inspection dates

27–28 April 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
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and governors have not successfully communicated their vision for the school to all staff.
- Leaders and governors have not effectively monitored the quality of education provided by the school. They do not have a clear enough understanding of the performance of the school and have not consistently held staff to account.
- The governing body has not fulfilled its statutory duties with regard to the education of children looked after.
- Teaching requires improvement because it is inconsistent across the school. In some classes, teachers make insufficient use of information about pupils to plan learning effectively and to use time efficiently.
- Behaviour requires improvement because in some cases management of the most challenging behaviours is not well planned and staff have too few options available to them.
- Communication with parents requires improvement because leaders do not always respond well to parents' queries.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has made a positive start to her role and is quickly getting a clear view of the school and ways in which it can be improved.
- 16 to 19 provision is good because leaders and staff have high expectations and, as a result, students leave the school well prepared for the future.
- Early years provision is good because leaders and teachers know the children well and ensure that learning is both engaging and matched to the children's needs and abilities.
- Personal development of pupils is good. Staff know the pupils well and provide effective support and guidance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - clarifying roles and responsibilities at all levels
 - revising monitoring processes so that leaders and governors have an accurate view of standards and performance of all aspects of the school's work
 - ensuring that there are clear plans, strategically and operationally, that enable leaders and governors to improve the school
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders to account for the standards achieved by the school
 - ensuring that governors fulfil their statutory duties for the education of children looked after.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - assessment information for all subjects is accurate and is used to inform learning
 - information from statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans is also used to inform learning
 - the quality of teaching is evaluated against the progress that pupils make towards accurate and challenging targets
 - time is used effectively for learning.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - ensuring that the school behaviour policy is consistently applied
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of leaders at all levels for behaviour management
 - ensuring that behaviour plans are thoroughly considered and contain a range of well thought out options for managing the most challenging behaviours.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over the past academic year leaders have not clearly articulated their vision for the school to parents and staff. As a result, a small minority of parents do not believe that the school provides valuable information or responds well to concerns.
- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and governors have not sustained a culture in which all staff believe in what leaders are trying to achieve. As a result, a minority of staff do not believe that leaders engender a climate of trust, and a small minority do not feel that leaders motivate them.
- Leaders' implementation of management systems and processes has been inconsistent. Consequently, leaders and governors do not have a clear and accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school.
- The systems and processes that leaders use to manage the performance of staff are appropriate. However, they have not resulted in consistently high standards of teaching because they have not been rigorously implemented.
- Overall, by the time pupils leave West Gate School, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. However, because of inconsistencies in teaching, not all pupils are well prepared for key stages 2, 3 or 4.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities including English, mathematics, geography, history, religious education (RE) and science in addition to technical, social, artistic and physical learning. However, the curriculum in key stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 is confused between meeting the needs of individual pupils and the frameworks that leaders have put in place.
- Leaders have ensured that social education is strong, and this is reflected in the positive relationships evident in most classes and around school. Leaders recognise that moral, cultural and spiritual education is less well developed, with limited evidence in pupils' work, in classes, around school or in school documentation and guidance. Consequently, they have audited the provision, prior to planning improvements.
- Leaders have issued some guidance on British values, and some elements are evident in teachers' planning. However, leaders have yet to evaluate the provision and the impact.
- Leaders can show how they have used pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up premium. They have used additional funding to provide reading resources and music therapy. However, leaders have not evaluated the impact of the funding on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have used physical education (PE) and sports funding to enable 186 pupils to participate in specialist coaching sessions. This contributed to the school achieving the School Games Mark Gold Award. However, leaders were not able to show that the funding had resulted in improved sport and PE for all pupils.
- The new headteacher has made a positive start and over her first two weeks is developing an accurate view of the school. Middle leaders are keen and willing. However, they are having a limited impact because their roles lack clarity and they do not know what they are accountable for.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governance of the school requires improvement because governors have not been successful in communicating their vision for the school to staff and parents. As a result, a small minority of staff do not feel motivated or supported, and a small minority of parents have an issue with school communication.
 - For a range of reasons, this has been a challenging year for governors and school leaders. Governors were supportive of the acting headteacher in the autumn and spring terms this year and supported her in effectively addressing the significant challenges that she was presented with. Overall, governors are not sufficiently or appropriately challenging school leaders. As a result, leadership and management of the school have been inconsistent and have lacked a focus on continually improving standards of teaching and learning.
 - The role of governors in the strategic planning for the school has been limited. As a result, they have not been able to support leaders and managers to effectively drive up standards and improve pupil outcomes over this academic year.
 - Governors have not fulfilled their statutory duties with regard to the education of children looked after. The duties include appointing a qualified teacher as the school designated teacher for children looked after, ensuring that the designated teacher has undertaken suitable training, and considering an

annual report from the designated teacher on the education of children looked after attending West Gate School.

- Governors understand their role in the performance management of staff and of the headteacher, and are clear about how it relates to pay awards. However, they have not applied this knowledge to challenge and support leaders to use performance management to drive up standards.
- Following support from the local authority, governors have a better understanding of the effectiveness of the school than previously. However, they still do not know the school well and, as a result, have not been able to hold leaders to account.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All parents who spoke with inspectors and most parents who responded to Parent View stated that their child felt safe at West Gate School.
- There is a designated safeguarding governor, and leaders have ensured that, in addition to the designated lead for safeguarding, six school leaders have completed the designated leads' safeguarding training. Staff have also received safeguarding training this academic year, including the 'Prevent' duty guidance on combatting extremism.
- Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They know what they are looking for and know what to do should they have any concerns. School staff have effective relationships with outside agencies, including the local authority designated officer who said that the school's response to safeguarding concerns have been effective. The record-keeping systems employed are secure and comprehensive. However, they do not include a mechanism to remind staff to chase outside agencies for outstanding actions.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious incident that occurred at the school since the previous inspection is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered, where appropriate, alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection, to inform inspectors' judgements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is inconsistent between classes. In some classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Where teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of the pupils and adults. They use information about the pupils, including academic performance information, to plan learning that meets pupils' needs. In addition, where teaching is strong, adults use questioning effectively to move pupils on in their learning and to involve the pupils in the feedback process.
- Where teaching is not yet good, academic assessment information is not always accurate and, as a result, teachers do not provide pupils with appropriately challenging learning activities. Similarly, where teaching is not good, teachers do not use the information contained in pupils' statements and education, health and care plans effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. As a result, activities do not always engage pupils in their learning. In addition, where teaching is not good, teachers and support staff do not use time sufficiently well, and too often teachers do not plan enough challenging activities to maximise pupils' learning.
- Leaders' expectations of how teachers plan and deliver lessons and assess pupils' progress are not clear, and they do not monitor effectively. This has led to an inconsistency of approach, which results in inconsistent progress.
- In some cases, teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour effectively enough and, as a result, pupils' learning is disrupted.
- The majority of parents believe that the school provides them with useful information, but a minority do not believe that they receive enough information about how their children are progressing at school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know the pupils well and are well placed to provide additional support and guidance.
- Teachers ensure that the personal development of pupils is well focused through a single-page profile available for each pupil. The school uses person-centred reviews to ensure that next steps in their education, employment and care are planned with the pupil, their families and partner agencies. This has led to raised expectations of pupils and their future opportunities.
- Pupils are proud of their school and talk about a number of aspects of school that they particularly enjoy, such as food, sport or playtimes. They also talk positively about their achievements and targets. However, they did not share any enthusiasm for or enjoyment of learning.
- Pupils get on well together and there is evidence around school in lessons and at break times that the social aspects of education are strong at West Gate School.
- Overall, emotional well-being and physical well-being are clearly positive for most pupils and enhanced for some. However, a very small minority of pupils are stressed by what is expected of them and this has an impact on their well-being.
- A large majority of staff and parents believe that pupils are well cared for and safe. No parents or staff reported any concerns to the inspectors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because behaviour management is not consistent. Leaders have not monitored the implementation and impact of the behaviour policy, including behaviour management planning for pupils with challenging behaviours. Consequently, staff have not always prepared sufficiently well for those pupils with more challenging behaviour. As a result, in some cases, when faced by challenging behaviour, staff and leaders appear to have run out of options. For example, the use of safe spaces was inappropriate and insufficiently considered.
- This inconsistency in the management of behaviour by leaders and teachers was reflected in the views of staff, of which a small minority do not believe that leaders support them with pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are trained in an approach to de-escalating behaviour, physical interventions and behaviour management. However, they have not evaluated the impact that this has had on the quality of planning and the management of pupils with challenging behaviours. There was little evidence that advice and support from staff trained in this approach was supporting colleagues with their behaviour management planning or improving outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are mixed. Where pupils are engaged in their learning, staff have an enthusiasm for what they are teaching, and the pupils can see the purpose to the learning.
- Attendance of pupils at West Gate School is above the national average for special schools.
- Overall exclusions are below the national average and the national average for special schools.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils are not yet good because leaders are not able to demonstrate that pupils in all year groups and across a wide range of subjects make consistently strong progress from their starting points.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are not yet good because leaders are not able to demonstrate that these pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. However, the school's performance information suggests that pupils in receipt of pupil premium achieve better than their peers in English and mathematics.
- Outcomes are not yet good because leaders have not ensured that there is a clear link between a pupil's individual targets, drawn from a statement or education, care and health plan, and the day-to-day experience of pupils at school. This is compounded by the inconsistent application of target setting by different teachers. Some targets are vague and are not easily understood by adults or pupils.
- The information held by the school about pupils' progress suggests that in key stages 2, 3 and 4 pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. However, inspectors

found that, despite moderation of assessments, some of this information was not accurate, and therefore inspectors could not be assured that outcomes were good.

- Those pupils who can access reading with appropriate resources say that they enjoy reading.
- Pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training because the person-centred review process enables pupils, parents and staff to establish a clear route to the next stage.

Early years provision is good

- Leaders and managers have a detailed and accurate view of children's needs. They ensure that activities are both engaging and appropriately matched to the children's individual needs and abilities.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The teaching and learning leader has a good understanding of all aspects of assessment and uses this well to plan for developments in all areas of learning, including phonics. Teachers maintain high expectations of all children and, as a result, evidence in work files and tracking information shows that children make good progress from their starting points.
- The learning that adults provide for the children encourages them to make independent choices and prepares them well for the next stage of their school life. Provision for all aspects of social development is particularly strong.
- Behaviour is good and, when needed, adults use effective strategies to refocus and engage children in their learning.
- Partnerships with parents are strong, and parents frequently come into class at the beginning and end of the day. Home-school diaries are used daily to good effect, and in one class the day's activities are recorded on the board to share with parents at the end of the day.
- Safeguarding is effective.

16 to 19 study programmes are good

- 16 to 19 provision is well led and managed, and the school fulfils the requirements of the Department for Education 16 to 19 study programme. As a result, students leaving the provision move on to meaningful destinations such as Leicester College or social care packages of support. They are well prepared for their future.
- Leaders have high expectations of the students and ensure that the students receive a personalised curriculum that challenges them, for example as seen in the sex education lesson in which students were observed responding maturely to the learning activity.
- Leaders know what is being taught and what each student is learning. All students are in education, care or training. Students engage positively with the provision and make good progress from their starting points. Some 16 to 19 students respond well to being at the learning centre at New College Leicester. Their behaviours for learning are improved in this environment.
- English and mathematics are well taught through regular functional skills sessions linked to real life scenarios and through discrete lessons. Leaders ensure that students' work experiences are also suitably challenging and meet the needs of students. For example, students gain work experience with employers such as Halfords or Marriott hotels, or charities such as The Salvation Army. Leaders ensure equality of opportunity by providing students who experience difficulties with work experience with additional school or class responsibilities.
- Leaders also ensure that students receive appropriate information, guidance and advice about their future education, training or employment through effective person-centred reviews. As a result, students all have positive destinations to look forward to. For example, some students have accessed GCSE courses at New College Leicester. Once students have left the provision, the rates of retention in their new locations are strong.
- Teachers ensure that students' learning is informed by assessment information, such as functional skills assessment, and their identified needs. This is clearly recorded in their individual education plans, which are effectively used by staff to ensure that the provision meets the students' needs. Similarly, staff expect some students at the New College site to get themselves ready to learn.

School details

Unique reference number	131099
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10005505

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Canon Peter Taylor
Headteacher	Denise Williams
Telephone number	0116 255 2187
Website	www.westgate.leicester.sch.uk/
Email address	dwilliams@westgate.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 April 2013

Information about this school

- The new headteacher took up post two weeks ago. Prior to this, the deputy headteacher, following the resignation of the previous headteacher, had led the school.
- West Gate School is a maintained special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, complex needs, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have an education health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- There are 196 pupils aged between four and 19 years of age. Approximately 1.5% of pupils are in the early years.
- Approximately half of the pupils are White British and a greater than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- A greater than average proportion of pupils receive free school meals.
- The school is a member of the Well Trust and is an accredited provision by the National Autistic Society.
- The school is located on two sites in Leicester. Pupils from Year R to Year 11 are located on the Glenfield Road site, and students in post-16 provision attend the learning centre at the New College site where they can access courses at the college.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited both of the sites.
- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons mostly with senior leaders. Inspectors also accompanied the headteacher on walks around the school and looked at short periods of learning in classrooms.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, teachers, support staff and governors.
- Inspectors considered parents' views, including 20 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View.
- The lead inspector met with the local authority raising achievement partner who is currently working with the school.
- The inspectors listened to the views of staff and evaluated 52 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and education, health and care plans.

Inspection team

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