

Wathen Grange School

Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 1PZ

Inspection dates 26–28 April 2016

Overall effectiveness **Inadequate**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and managers have not ensured the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Leadership and management are inadequate because safeguarding is ineffective. Record-keeping of child protection concerns is poor, making it difficult to establish what actions have been taken, and how cases have been resolved. The single central record has omissions and does not meet the regulations. The anti-bullying policy does not cover gender-based or homophobic bullying.
- Teaching requires improvement. The inability to recruit or retain staff, or staff absence, has weakened the quality of teaching in English, computing, and personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- Pupils' progress requires improvement. Pupils do not make rapid progress to make up lost ground. The most able pupils do not gain the higher examination grades they are capable of.
- The school does not have clear evidence of the impact of additional funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- There are significant gaps in pupils' learning. This is because there has been a succession of different teachers, who have not built systematically upon pupils' previous learning. Pupils do not read widely and often enough.
- Some aspects of the curriculum are not taught, such as technology and computing.
- The school's self-evaluation is not current and does not paint an accurate picture of the school.
- The directors who act as governors of the school have not successfully tackled staff recruitment and retention issues. They have not ensured that safeguarding procedures are sufficiently secure.
- The fragility of staffing impedes the school's capacity to improve both rapidly and sustainably.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has a strong pastoral focus and works closely with parents and other agencies.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and the revised reward system is effective in promoting good behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy school and say they feel safe. Attendance is improving.

The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve safeguarding procedures so that they are robust with regard to:
 - improving the the quality of record-keeping for child protection concerns
 - ensuring the single central register contains details of checks on staff relating to the prohibition of teaching and reference to the barred list
 - ensuring the anti-bullying policy covers all types of prejudicial bullying.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - securing the capacity of the school to improve through recruitment and retention of staff
 - ensuring the school's self-evaluation captures strengths and weaknesses more accurately
 - measuring more clearly the impact of additional funding on pupils' progress
 - improving the curriculum so that pupils are taught technology and computing and more-able pupils are enabled to achieve higher-level qualifications
 - ensure the school website contains all required information.
- Accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure
 - making better use of information technology to support pupils' learning.

The school must meet the following independent school standards:

- Ensure that full-time supervised education is provided for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), and which gives pupils experience in technological education (paragraph 2(1), 2(2)(a)).
- Enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3, 3(a)).
- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school (paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- The proprietor should ensure that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy (paragraph 10).
- Ensure that checks are made to establish whether a person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act; (paragraph 21(3), 21(3)(a) (ii)).
- Ensure that checks are made to establish whether a person is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction (paragraph 21(3), 21(3)(a)(iii)).
- In relation to each member of staff, ensure that checks are made to establish whether they are subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed (paragraph 21(3), 21(3)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently and their responsibilities are fulfilled effectively (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Not all the independent school standards are met and this has a negative impact on the progress, safety and achievement of pupils.
- Staffing is too fragile. The school is ambitious to improve but the lack of permanent teaching staff hampers the capacity of the school to do better. There has been a succession of different staff in some subjects.
- Assessment information is not analysed well enough to inform leaders and managers what is working well and what is not. For example, the use of pupil premium funding is not evaluated to measure what impact it has had on improving pupils' progress.
- The school's self-evaluation is out of date and does not accurately reflect the school's current strengths and weaknesses. It is too optimistic. The recent school improvement plan focuses well on appropriate priorities but the impact of actions is not yet clear. Many of the actions in relation to leadership and management have been put on hold.
- The curriculum does not cover all areas of learning. Technology is not taught. The lack of subject expertise means that computing is not currently taught.
- The curriculum allows pupils to experience some success, and leaders have started to ensure that pupils can gain functional skills qualifications in Year 10, with a view to building on this with higher qualifications. Pupils are offered suitable vocational courses and experiences at local colleges or alternative providers. Monitoring to ensure pupils are safe and making expected progress on these placements is secure.
- The head of education is beginning to bring about improvements and is putting in appropriate systems to more effectively track pupils' progress and improve the quality of teaching. Performance management of staff identifies further training needs and is directed at securing good teaching for permanent staff.
- There are effective end-of-day debriefing meetings for staff, which help to quickly address areas of concern in relation to pupils. Staff use their close knowledge of pupils to address barriers to their learning and behaviour.
- Pupils are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain. They learn about British values and broaden their experience of different cultures and backgrounds through subjects such as art and cookery and through visits of cultural and historical significance.
- The school ensures that equal opportunities are afforded to its pupils. Relationships are positive and pupils consider different views and issues each morning regarding items of interest, or that are in the news. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted well and they learn to manage their behaviour effectively.
- Appropriate careers guidance is in place. The school works hard to prepare pupils for their next steps. Some pupils take vocational courses in construction or business administration, with a view to pursuing these options when they leave school.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website in respect of publishing the impact of pupil premium funding on pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The school has a board of directors who oversee the work of the school. They meet regularly to receive reports from the headteacher. They have used the services of an external headteacher to bring about greater challenge, but these recommendations have not been acted on swiftly enough.
 - Staff have performance management targets aimed at improving their skills, knowledge and teaching. However, the link between pay progression and performance management is weak.
 - All the required checks on the safety of the building are carried out as required. The premises are in good repair. Appropriate risk assessments are in place for activities and external visits.
 - The directors have too positive a view of the school's outcomes. They have not ensured that teaching, safeguarding procedures and outcomes for pupils are good.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The single central record has omissions with respect to the recording of checks against the barred list and prohibition of teaching. Record-keeping of child protection files does not clearly show how actions have been followed up and their outcomes. The anti-bullying policy does not cover gender-based or homophobic bullying. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance and is available on the school's website. The designated

safeguarding lead has completed the relevant training. Staff have received training on extremism, child sexual exploitation and e-safety. Staff work well with outside agencies to support pupils, families and carers, for example to improve pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The lack of consistent teaching over time and the absence of some staff due to illness have weakened the quality of teaching in English, computing and PSHE.
- The school's marking policy is implemented inconsistently. This slows pupils' progress.
- The teaching of reading requires improvement. Most pupils are able but reluctant readers and do not have sufficient opportunities to read for pleasure. Similarly, in writing, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length and for different purposes in both English and other subjects.
- Information technology is not used well enough to support pupils' learning in lessons. Most tasks are completed by hand, some find writing laborious, and opportunities to use computers are infrequent.
- Teachers encourage pupils' positive attitudes for learning. Where staffing is stable, teachers create a supportive and encouraging atmosphere in which pupils participate well. The informal atmosphere helps to put pupils at ease.
- Mathematics is taught well. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills and gain confidence in solving algebraic equations. For example, pupils learn how to inverse, expand and reduce brackets when tackling algebraic problems. The teaching of science is improving well. The quality of teaching of the current permanent staff is good.
- Where teaching is stable, in mathematics and science, assessment information is used appropriately to pitch work at the right level for pupils. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated.
- In art and cookery, pupils learn well. Teachers build effectively on the pupils' interests and what they already know. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they take satisfaction in their achievements.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

are inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because the school's arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. Leaders have not ensured that all appropriate pre-employment checks have been carried out on staff. Record-keeping of child protection files does not show clearly enough how leaders have dealt with the concerns raised.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They have good opportunities to visit places of interest such as Mam Tor, and experience different cultures and beliefs.
- Various subjects such as art, cookery, and the PSHE programme, help pupils to understand about different faiths, cultures and lifestyles. Pupils have visited different places of worship and looked at designs of different churches.
- In lessons, pupils contribute their views sensibly. Pupils show respect for the fabric of the building and the staff.
- Incidents of bullying are not common but when they occur staff respond quickly and effectively. Pupils say they feel safe. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example about the dangers of carrying a knife and how to keep safe online.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is good. It has improved well since the last inspection. Most have positive attitudes to learning and try their best to complete work in lessons. Pupils spoken to say they enjoy school and felt they had made improvements in their behaviour and attendance.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is mostly good. Lessons are calm and purposeful and behaviour rarely impedes learning. The new reward system is proving effective. Pupils are motivated to work hard and behave in order to gain points so that they can participate in monthly special events.
- The need for physical interventions by staff is minimal and has reduced significantly over the last 12 months, so that they are now a rarity. Pupils cooperate well with one another in lessons.
- Nearly all pupils make substantial improvements in their attendance. Sometimes pupils follow a part-time timetable initially and increase their attendance until they attend full-time. Fixed-term exclusions are low.

- Pupils' personal development and welfare are encouraged well through the use of suitable alternative providers.

Outcomes for children and learners

require improvement

- Pupils' attainment on entry varies considerably. Most have lost ground because of disrupted schooling. Pupils' outcomes require improvement in English, computing and PSHE because progress from their starting points is too slow and fragmented. This is largely due to frequent changes in teaching staff, or staff absence. Pupils' workbooks in these areas also reflect inconsistent progress and gaps in their learning. Pupils' progress in art dipped when there was a change of teachers but is beginning to improve now that teaching is stable.
- The school does not have sufficient evidence to show whether those pupils who receive additional funding are closing the gap on their peers.
- The high turnover of teaching staff has restricted the most able pupils' opportunities to study courses that are more challenging. This means by the time they are 16 they only achieve lower GCSE grades or functional skills level 1, when potentially some could achieve higher levels. Recently pupils have started to gain functional skills level 1 in Year 10, with a view to stretching the most able pupils to achieve level 2 awards the following year. The school plans to offer higher-level courses in science through online tutoring.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, and the rate of progress in science is improving well. Pupils enjoy practical subjects such as cookery where they have achieved food hygiene certificates of competence. Pupils gain a suitable range of ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) vocational qualifications in personal independence. Most pupils make steady improvements in their reading and spelling ages.

School details

Unique reference number	134614
Inspection number	10006016
DfE registration number	937/6104

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Proprietor	Complete Care Works
Chair	J Mangat
Headteacher	Steven Shiner
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000
Telephone number	01827 714 454
Website	www.wathengrange.com
Email address	s.shiner@wathengrange.com
Date of previous school inspection	3 June 2014

Information about this school

- Wathen Grange School offers day provision for a maximum of 20 pupils aged 11 to 16 years with social, emotional or mental health needs. There are currently six pupils; all British boys, aged 11 to 16 years.
- Most of the current pupils come from nearby local authorities. Five pupils have statements of special educational needs and one pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- The school aims to prepare its pupils for social challenges, economic independence, and the demands of adulthood. It also aims to offer a curriculum that broadly follows the national curriculum while incorporating an appropriate range of knowledge, skills, and experiences beyond the classroom.
- The school was inspected in March 2012; it met most, but not all, of the regulations. The school submitted an action plan outlining its proposals to address this, which was evaluated and accepted in October 2012. In March 2013, an unannounced emergency inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education in response to two anonymous complaints. Two regulations were identified as not having been met. The school submitted an action plan indicating how it would address these. A progress monitoring inspection visit was made in November 2013 and one regulation was found not to be met. Another monitoring visit to check the progress made by the school in implementing its action plan took place in June 2014, when it was found to have made good progress in implementing the action plan and met all regulations.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for a small number of pupils who are in the care of the local authority. This funding provides additional support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The headteacher is on long-term absence. The school has a part-time head of education on site for two days per week.
- The school uses one alternative provider called K2, which provides construction courses for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed five parts of lessons, some of which were joint observations with the head of education.
- Pupils' work, surveys, annual reports and other records were scrutinised.
- The school's documentation was examined, including planning for subjects, and records of pupils' progress and the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The views of pupils were sought through individual discussions.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View, but the inspector took into account other comments from a school-based questionnaire.

Inspection team

Frank Price, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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