

Norden High School and Sports College

Stourton Street, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 4ED

Inspection dates	24–25 May 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

- Standards in mathematics and across a range of subjects are too low.
- Teaching is not good enough. Too much teaching is dull and fails to engage pupils; this leads to low-level disruption.
- In too many subjects, assessment is inconsistent and information about pupils' progress is unreliable. Targets for pupils' achievement are not challenging enough.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged do not achieve well and have low attendance.
- The most able pupils are not stretched enough in their learning and consequently do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders' capacity to improve the school is impeded by an overgenerous self-evaluation which gives staff and governors an unrealistic picture of current standards.
- Aspects of the key stage 3 curriculum are not challenging enough and pupils repeat learning from primary school.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Not enough attention is given to the safeguarding of pupils who are educated off-site. Not all necessary checks on teachers have been carried out. Year 11 pupils go off-site at lunchtime without signing in or out of school. There are not enough staff on duty at lunchtime to adequately supervise pupils.
- Governors do not hold senior leaders to account stringently enough for the wide gaps in the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently well managed by teachers and some staff fail to take responsibility for the behaviour in their classrooms and around the school site.
- While many pupils sit at tables in the hall to eat their lunch, many also eat outside sitting on the floor or standing up. This leads to an unsuitable lunchtime environment. In addition, there is too much litter left at the end of lunch.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in English due to strong leadership and some high-quality teaching.
- The curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular clubs, including foreign trips, sports clubs and the recent introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- The leadership and management of behaviour have been strengthened by the appointment of a behaviour manager.

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?

- Rapidly raise outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the most able, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that pupils' targets are sufficiently challenging
 - improving the quality of writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar across the curriculum
 - ensuring that funds provided for the pupil premium are used to better effect.
- Improve behaviour and attendance by:
 - effectively supporting pupils who are disadvantaged to attend school regularly
 - checking that all staff consistently apply the behaviour policy in lessons and at social times
 - ensuring that lunchtime arrangements are improved to better safeguard pupils and improve their well-being.
- Eradicate weak teaching and make learning engaging by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve in every lesson
 - using better exemplification and explanation so that pupils are clear what they are learning
 - reviewing the curriculum to prevent the repetition of work that pupils have covered at primary school
 - ensuring that learning is adapted to allow pupils of different abilities to make good progress.
- Increase the capacity for improvement and strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that self-evaluation is accurate
 - strengthening safeguarding arrangements, including for those who are educated off-site
 - ensuring that governors challenge senior leaders more rigorously, particularly around the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils, and ensure that statutory requirements are met
 - checking that middle leaders' monitoring focuses upon the quality of learning as well as compliance with the school's policies.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

is inadequate

- Leaders and governors are beginning to raise expectations but these are not shared by all staff. In too many classrooms expectations are not high enough. Some staff ignore poor behaviour or fail to follow the school's very clear procedure; this leads to inequalities in how pupils are treated and how well they learn.
- The leadership of teaching and learning was strengthened two years ago by the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, but there remains a body of teaching which is weak, characterised by expectations that are far too low; this is why standards are not rising rapidly across the school.
- Leaders and managers have tackled the performance of some staff whose teaching was poor; in some instances, this resulted in high staff absence. This has led to a drain on the budget. As a result, all senior leaders have considerable teaching commitments for GCSE classes, which restricts their capacity to monitor standards across the school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupil premium funding is spent on staffing costs but there is little evidence of impact as outcomes for this group remain low. Last year only a minority of disadvantaged pupils made expected progress in mathematics. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers remain too wide and show little improvement. Attendance for this group, compared with all pupils nationally, is too low.
- The curriculum has been refined to take out a number of subjects such as law and business studies where pupils were not achieving well. The most effective teachers of mathematics have been deployed to teach the middle-ability pupils this year to improve their progress. Unfortunately, this is at the expense of the most able pupils, who are not forecast to do as well as last year.
- Some staff give generously of their time to take a variety of extra-curricular activities, including lunchtime sports clubs, overseas visits and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils have received public recognition for their performances of Shakespeare and for their singing abilities.
- The leadership and management of behaviour have recently been strengthened and pupils speak very positively about the impact of the new behaviour manager. A very clear system is in place for behaviour management and reported incidents are closely followed up. However, inspectors observed that there are too many staff who do not follow the school's procedures and some reported to inspectors that they do not see behaviour management as their responsibility.
- Evidence of monitoring visits show that the local authority has given very clear guidance to the school, particularly governors, about what needs to be done, but not all the recommendations for action have been implemented.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Minutes of governors' meetings show that governors ask questions about the standards achieved in the school but they do not challenge leaders rigorously enough. Governors agree with the school's self-evaluation that standards are good. This shows that they do not have a good enough understanding of how the school's performance compares to that of all schools nationally. They do not challenge senior leaders enough about the wide gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
 - Governors are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching, along with the local authority school improvement partner. Governors had also checked the single central record, which did not meet requirements.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Year 11 pupils are allowed off-site at lunchtime to visit local shops. At lunchtime, procedures to know which pupils are on or off the premises are not good enough and supervision of pupils is inadequate. Not all necessary checks have been carried out on staff.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is inadequate

- Too much teaching is dull, poorly planned and inappropriate for pupils' abilities. There is not enough good teaching to accelerate pupils' achievement.
- Scrutiny of books shows that there are wide variations in the quality of assessment. Some books are well-marked and accurately assessed, for example in English, while others are not marked according to the school's policy and assessments are inaccurate.

- The teaching of mathematics is not good enough. This was shown in a Year 9 mathematics lesson in which pupils were working on balancing equations; there was too little focus on enhancing pupils' mathematical understanding or reasoning. Scrutiny of mathematics books shows variability in the quality of assessment. There are similar weaknesses in drama and design and technology.
- Teaching in key stage 3 science does not enable pupils to develop the skills and understanding they need for the rest of their secondary education. In a Year 7 science lesson, for example, pupils were planning an investigation. Low-level disruption by a few pupils prevented others from making good progress. Not all pupils completed their planning and not enough support was given to those with poor literacy skills.
- Teachers do not always explain well enough to pupils what they are required to do; consequently pupils are unclear about their learning and unsure of what they need to do to succeed.
- In too many lessons teaching has no impact because of pupils' weak behaviour. The link between poor behaviour and limited progress was typified in a Year 8 history lesson in which pupils were learning about slavery. Some pupils were silly and talked to each other while the teacher was talking. Very little progress was made because there was no support for pupils with weak literacy. The work was too easy for some and inaccessible for others. Some pupils displayed poor subject knowledge, started to misbehave and were sent out without appropriate warning and with no regard to the behaviour management system. By contrast, pupils were observed making good progress in English and art due to the teacher's clear explanations and careful planning. Pupils showed strong subject knowledge and, as a result, were able to refine their work using a variety of techniques. Pupils were well engaged in their learning and effective interventions were in place for those whose progress was behind that of their classmates. Inspectors also observed some effective teaching in history and physical education.

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 arrangements to safeguard those pupils who are educated off-site are not good enough. Sometimes pupils are marked in attendance at an off-site provision when they do not attend on those days. This is a safeguarding concern.
- A small minority of parents who responded to Parent View do not feel that their child is safe in school, although all pupils spoken to by inspectors reported that they felt safe.
- Some teachers do not conduct themselves in a professional manner. One parent commented: 'Some staff members are rather rude when talking to some pupils. Some of them come across as not caring.'
- The school has no dedicated cafeteria space and although the school hall is used for pupils to eat food they have bought or their packed lunch, many pupils choose to take their lunch outside and sit on a bench, on the floor or stand to eat. This is not a nice environment for them to eat their lunch, among the litter and chewing gum.
- When child protection issues arise, they are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Work has been done to tackle bullying, racism and to prevent extremism. Incidents of racism and bullying are centrally logged and monitored. Senior leaders ensure that reported incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. A high number of pupils were excluded from school on a temporary basis last year due to poor behaviour. Since the reorganisation of the behaviour provision and the creation of the behaviour support centre, exclusions have significantly reduced.
- However, many pupils are still being removed from lessons for a number of reasons, including using their mobile phones, using offensive language to teachers and other pupils, bullying, throwing items across the classroom and dangerous use of school resources. Pupils are referred to the behaviour support centre or given a fixed-term exclusion for more serious offences.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is low and in decline. Year 11 pupils are allowed off the school site at lunchtime. There is no system to sign them in or out, which is a safeguarding concern.
- A small minority of parents do not feel that the school ensures that its pupils are well behaved.
- Despite the best efforts of senior leaders requesting more staff on duty at lunchtimes, there are not enough to supervise pupils adequately. Pupils report smoking around the school site. Some pupils get

away with using bad language, throwing food or dropping litter because there are not enough staff monitoring their behaviour. This undermines the standards that senior leaders are trying to set.

- In many lessons observed by inspectors, behaviour was adequate or better. However, records of behaviour over time and reports from pupils illustrate that low-level disruption to learning is too common and that there are some very serious behaviour incidents.
- There is a direct correlation between the quality of teaching and quality of behaviour. Pupils report and inspectors observed that there is more disruption to learning when teaching is weaker.
- Many pupils were very polite to inspectors and other adults, but a small minority are inappropriate in their manner to visitors and teachers.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- For the past three years the proportion of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A* at C, including English and mathematics, has been significantly below the national average. Many pupils make good progress in English from their starting points, but last year in mathematics approximately half of the pupil cohort failed to make the progress expected of them.
- Predictions for this summer's GCSE examinations show that standards are set to rise, but these forecasts are unreliable due to the gulf in the quality of teaching and assessment both within and between departments.
- Targets are not challenging enough and do not take account of pupils' starting points; this leads to underachievement.
- Gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and their classmates are too wide. Last year approximately two thirds of disadvantaged pupils did not make the progress expected of them in mathematics. This means that many of them will have to continue retaking mathematics while they are at college or sixth form until they achieve a grade C or better.
- School leaders are predicting slightly improved results for disadvantaged pupils this summer, but the improvement is not enough; furthermore, the information underpinning this prediction is unreliable as there is too much variation in the quality of assessment.
- Pupils are not making rapid enough progress to yield much better outcomes. Too often pupils are unchallenged by their learning, and time is spent going over old ground with topics they have covered at primary school.
- Weak literacy is a key barrier to effective learning for many pupils. While pupils make good progress in English, the standard of writing, punctuation, spelling and grammar across the curriculum varies greatly.

School details

Unique reference number	119717
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10012197

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	504
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Lockwood
Headteacher	Tim Mitchell
Telephone number	01254 885378
Website	www.nordenhighschool.co.uk
Email address	tmitchell@nordenhighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen year on year.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of new appointments to senior and middle leadership.
- A few pupils attend alternative provision or are educated at home. Providers include Accrington and Rossendale College, the St Thomas's Centre and The Heights.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school's website does not meet requirements for the publication of information. There is no clear identification of who to contact for enquiries about the school. There is no clear link to national performance tables produced by the Department for Education and no visible information about pupils' attainment in all of the ways described in the statutory requirements. There should be a section on the website detailing governors' business and other interests.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons and during social times. Senior leaders took part in some joint lesson observations alongside inspectors. Inspectors scrutinised documentation pertaining to pupils' achievement, self-evaluation, performance management of staff and school improvement. They looked at minutes of governing body meetings, financial information, current attendance and behaviour information and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, senior leaders, middle leaders, and a representative from the local authority. They took account of 26 responses to the staff questionnaire and 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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