

Gateacre School

Hedgefield Road, Liverpool L25 2RW

Inspection dates	18–19 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
16 to 19 study programmes	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is inadequate. Procedures are too lax and cannot be relied upon to identify when pupils may be at risk.
- Achievement is inadequate. In 2015, outcomes did not meet the government's current floor standards. From their starting points, too few pupils make sufficient progress in the majority of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special education needs or disability and the most able do not make sufficient progress. The gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in school and that of other pupils nationally are not closing rapidly enough.
- Teaching is inadequate because over time it has failed to ensure that pupils make enough progress. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not consistently follow the school's marking policy to provide pupils with clear feedback about how to improve their work.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are ineffective. Students do not make rapid progress, particularly in academic subjects, because they are not always placed on the most appropriate courses. Targets and expectations are too low and teaching is not challenging enough.
- Behaviour is inadequate. Attendance is too low and is not increasing quickly enough. Too many pupils are persistently absent and this hinders them from achieving as well as they should.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Outcomes of monitoring activities to check how well the school is doing are not evaluated robustly enough, so leaders and governors have an over-generous view of the school's effectiveness. They have not been able to make significant improvements to teaching and achievement since the previous inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils say that they feel safe when they are in school.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. Movement around the building is calm and orderly.
- Outcomes in music and art are good because teachers have high expectations, to which pupils respond.

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?

- Follow all statutory guidance to ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Rapidly increase the achievement of all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability, the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that achievement accelerates by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work which is challenging, particularly at key stage 3
 - improving the accuracy of assessment so that teachers are able to plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy so that pupils receive feedback which helps them to make progress
 - making sure that all teachers share responsibility for developing pupils' basic skills, particularly in literacy, for example, by giving them plenty of opportunities to write in detail.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers so that they are able to drive rapid improvement by:
 - rigorously evaluating the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement in order to check that they are working as expected
 - identifying and sharing the good practice in teaching which exists in parts of the school
 - ensuring that governors have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their statutory duties and to hold leaders to account.
- Improve the effectiveness of 16 to 19 study programmes to ensure that students make good progress by:
 - ensuring that students are placed on study programmes which meet their needs
 - ensuring that expectations of what students can achieve are high, and that they are set targets which are challenging.

A review of governance should be undertaken to assess how governors may improve their work.

A review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how the school may improve this aspect of its work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders have been unsuccessful in bringing about improvements to teaching and to pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. This is because they do not have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing. Although they have recently introduced a number of new systems and processes to check on the school's performance, these systems are not implemented rigorously enough. Leaders are over-generous in the analysis of their findings.
- Action plans to bring about improvements are too vague. Criteria for measuring the success of actions are not specific and this prevents leaders from evaluating their impact accurately.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress across the school are ineffective. The data which goes into the systems is incorrect because too many teachers do not assess pupils' work accurately. Leaders are unsure about what type of information is going into their systems. For example, some staff enter information about how well pupils are working currently; others enter predictions about what they are likely to attain in the future. Teachers and leaders are therefore unable to judge which pupils are underachieving and to put in the support needed to help them.
- The quality of teaching has not improved because senior and middle leaders do not make close enough links between the impact of teaching and the progress that pupils make. Too many middle leaders judge the quality of teaching in their areas to be good, despite poor outcomes. This over-generous view of the quality of teaching prevents them from identifying the key weaknesses in teaching which need to be improved in order to accelerate pupils' progress.
- There are a number of programmes in school for providing training and support for teachers to help them to improve their performance. However, as judgements about the quality of teaching are inaccurate, teachers are not always directed to programmes which best meet their needs. Leaders do not check the impact of training on improving the quality of teaching closely enough. All teachers are set targets for improving aspects of their performance, but the targets are not always clearly enough linked to key issues which will have the biggest impact on improving the school. For example, although attendance is a key issue in the school, no staff have targets linked to its improvement.
- The curriculum is ineffective because it does not promote equality and ensure that all groups of pupils are able to make good progress. Leaders do not check closely enough whether the key stage 3 curriculum is sufficiently challenging and enables pupils to build quickly on the knowledge and skills which they have gained from primary school. Changes are now being made to the key stage 3 curriculum.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate. Much of this is intended to be delivered through the mixed-age tutoring system, but tutors lack the skills and confidence to make this successful. Pupils of all ages are placed in the same tutor groups, and teachers are unable to cover controversial or sensitive topics in a way that is meaningful to all. Pupils are unable to talk confidently about the main principles of modern Britain such as democracy and the rule of law.
- Leaders have not used sources of funding, such as the pupil premium and the catch-up funding, well enough to accelerate the progress of those pupils for whose support these funds are intended. The pupil premium is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the catch-up premium supports pupils who join the school with low starting points in English or mathematics. Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others nationally are not closing, and lower attaining pupils in Year 7 are not catching up with their classmates quickly enough.
- Leaders work well with parents of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, in particular to check on how well they are achieving. Feedback from parents about the information they receive regarding how well their child is doing is typically positive.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors do not have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and are therefore unable to challenge leaders and hold them to account. They do not understand data well enough. They were not aware, for example, that achievement at key stage 3 is inadequate. They do not check closely enough on whether performance management targets are bringing about improvements in teaching. They know how pupil premium funding is spent, but do not know whether it is effective in closing the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. Attendance is too low and staff do not use the correct attendance codes when recording absence, so they do not know where pupils are and cannot tell

whether they are likely to be safe when they are not in school. Safeguarding training has been too brief and is out of date. Too many staff and governors do not know who the designated safeguarding person in school is, and are unsure of the referral processes if they think a pupil may be at risk. The risks of extremism have not been taken seriously enough within the school and teachers have not had sufficient training on how to protect pupils from radicalisation. Pupils are safe in school on a day-to-day basis, and the school works closely with parents of those children who are known to be vulnerable, but the safeguarding systems are too lax to give confidence that if an issue were to arise it would be spotted and addressed robustly enough.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teaching over time has failed to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress in the majority of year groups and subjects.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve. They set work which is undemanding and does not build rapidly enough on what pupils already know and can do. Many teachers do not take the levels with which pupils start school into account and repeat work which they have done at primary school. Many pupils therefore regress in Year 7. The most able pupils go unchallenged.
- Teachers do not use questioning well enough to encourage pupils to think and to explain their answers. Teachers too frequently accept one-word answers from pupils so that they are not supported to develop their confidence, or speaking and communication skills. Teachers do not give pupils sufficient time to explore and develop a firm understanding of difficult concepts.
- Too few teachers provide pupils with clear guidance about what high-quality work should look like. This means that the least able struggle because they do not have good models to follow to help them to complete their work well.
- The school has a clear policy which sets out how teachers should give feedback and how pupils should improve their work in response. Teachers do not follow this consistently. Some teachers do not mark pupils' work regularly enough; others mark but their comments are not clear enough to enable pupils to know what to do next. Leaders' systems to check teachers' marking have not identified this problem. Leaders have just been checking that teachers mark, not whether they mark effectively.
- Teachers do not place enough emphasis with the pupils on the quality of the presentation of their work. In some lessons, pupils produce work which is untidy and incomplete. Most teachers do not check pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation carefully enough. This includes the spellings of words which are important to their subjects. Opportunities for pupils to write in detail in subjects other than English are limited. Pupils do not therefore have the high-quality literacy skills which will enable them to communicate their ideas effectively at GCSE.
- Teachers are not able to assess pupils' work accurately and school systems for checking and solving this problem are not robust enough. Many teachers assess work too generously. As a result, they are not able to use accurate progress data to set work which matches the needs of the different groups of pupils.

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 school does not make strategic enough provision for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because pupils are not taught about complex issues in a meaningful way. Pupils have limited understanding of British values and some staff and governors express the view that this is because pupils are just not interested. Not enough is done, therefore, to engage pupils in topical issues in a way which will motivate them, either in lessons or in tutor time. As a result, they are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because there is a high staff presence and there is someone to turn to if incidents arise. They are very clear that bullying is unacceptable and that prejudice-based

bullying in particular will not be tolerated. Pupils report that the school provides a safe environment for those who are gay or transgender.

- Pupils are typically polite and helpful. They wear their uniforms with pride and take care to look after the school environment, for example by clearing away their litter at the end of breaks and lunchtimes. Movement around the school at breaks and lunchtimes is calm and orderly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Attendance is too low and is not improving. Too many pupils do not value their learning and this hinders their progress. Leaders' strategies for improving attendance have been ineffective because they do not use data well enough to check for attendance patterns. This is particularly difficult because incorrect codes are being used to record pupils' absences. Staff cannot be sure of the safety of pupils when they are not on site.
- Behaviour in lessons varies depending on the quality of teaching. Pupils quickly become bored when teaching is not challenging enough or does not meet their needs. They take part in low-level disruption, such as chatting, which is not always addressed swiftly enough by teachers. Pupils report that behaviour in low-ability sets is typically worse than in high-ability sets.
- Leaders do not analyse behaviour data rigorously. Behaviour logs indicate that the number of behaviour issues in a day is typically high. However, leaders do not use this information to identify patterns, areas of particular concern or the number of repeat offenders. As a result, they are unable to take carefully prioritised actions to improve behaviour, or to check whether their actions are working.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- In 2015, outcomes for Year 11 did not meet the government's floor standards for attainment and progress in English and mathematics. Although leaders' data indicates that outcomes should improve this year, their predictions about how well pupils should achieve are not matched by the quality of work in pupils' books.
- Leaders' data shows that from their starting points, few pupils in any year group are making even expected progress in the majority of subjects. Work in books confirms this. Inspectors sampled books from a number of pupils of different abilities. With the exception of art, none was found to be making good progress and the majority of the assessments recorded in pupils' books were marked over-generously.
- The most able pupils are not making good progress because they are not challenged. Like other pupils, they are set low-level tasks such as drawing posters and filling in word searches. Staff have low expectations. There is a belief in school that few pupils have done well in primary school and attained the highest key stage 2 levels. In fact, typically a quarter of pupils in most year groups are very able. They make poor progress because they are not building on what they learned at their previous schools.
- The least able pupils do not make good enough progress because teachers do not provide them with clear enough support, such as models or examples which they can follow. Many of them work hard, but because much of what they do is undemanding, they do not develop a deep understanding of important concepts. Individual pupils who have special educational needs or disability sometimes receive good support in individual lessons. However, leaders do not check closely enough on how well teachers meet their different types of need, so their progress over time is also inadequate.
- Disadvantaged pupils make inadequate progress. Gaps in achievement between these pupils and that of others in school are not particularly wide; this is because all underachieve. Gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils in school and others nationally are not closing. Most-able disadvantaged pupils, in particular, make poor progress.
- Pupils make better progress in English than they do in mathematics because they are given opportunities to write in detail and for different purposes. However, they are not expected to write to the same extent or with the same clarity in other subjects. This means that they are unable to make sufficient progress in other subjects that require lots of writing, such as history, geography and religious studies. Pupils do not enjoy reading and, although extra support is in place for pupils who struggle with reading and writing, leaders do not check closely enough that this support is working.
- Progress in mathematics is inadequate across the school and is not improving. The quality of teaching is not good enough to accelerate progress. Although there are some examples of effective teaching,

teachers typically are not able to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding nor to address any misconceptions. Pupils do not develop basic mathematical skills well enough to enable them to achieve at GCSE. They do not have enough opportunity to develop their understanding of concepts by using them to solve problems.

- Pupils make good progress in music and art in response to their teachers' high expectations. In 2015, the proportions of pupils who attained grades A* to C in these subjects were above the national average.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision make better progress than those in school. This is because the provision matches their needs well, and their progress is checked more closely. There are also good systems in place for checking that these pupils are safe and attending the provision regularly.

16 to 19 study programmes

are inadequate

- The 16 to 19 study programmes are inadequate. Safeguarding is ineffective and attendance is too low. Current progress information shows that students are not making the progress they should. While they make better progress on vocational programmes of study, standards at A level remain below the national averages. There are a number of reasons for this: teaching is not consistently good enough to accelerate progress from pupils' below-average starting points; some pupils do not have strong enough prior attainment to equip them for the courses on which they are enrolled; and targets in some subjects are insufficiently challenging. Pass rates for those students who resit English or mathematics GCSE are low.
- The proportion of pupils staying on in the sixth form for Year 13 is very low compared with the national average. Four out of 10 students leave after Year 12. This is partly because some pupils enrol on one-year courses, but also because some pupils are accepted on courses that are inappropriate for their abilities. The vast majority of students who do stay on in Year 13 progress to university.
- Students have mixed views about the sixth form. Some are very positive about their experience and cannot speak highly enough about the behaviour of students and the pastoral care they have received. They speak highly of the enrichment programme in Year 12 and take advantage of well-organised work experience. By contrast, others are highly critical and feel that they have been left with insufficient support and guidance to support their progress and to apply for university.

School details

Unique reference number	104700
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10012147

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,189
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Brown
Headteacher	Gerard Lonergan
Telephone number	0151 235 1400
Website	www.gateacre.liverpool.sch.uk
Email address	Gateacre-ao@gateacre.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 January 2013

Information about this school

- Gateacre School is larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- A few pupils attend alternative provision at Basetech Training, Award Education and Employability Solutions.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum national expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons. One of these lessons was observed jointly with a senior leader.
- Samples of pupils' work in books were scrutinised in lessons. In addition, jointly with the deputy headteacher, inspectors reviewed work from pupils in Years 7, 9 and 10 and from the sixth form.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including minutes of meetings, information provided to governors, action plans, examples of anonymised performance management targets and records of leaders' monitoring activities.
- Inspectors spoke formally with senior and middle leaders, as well as with the chair of the governing body and two other governors, and a representative from the local authority. They also held formal meetings with a number of groups of pupils, as well as talking to them informally at breaks and lunchtimes.
- A member of the inspection team visited pupils attending alternative provision.
- Inspectors took account of 71 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and 51 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Christine Birchall, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Bonenfant	Senior Her Majesty's Inspector
Sally Kenyon	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Hardman	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector

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