

# Oswaldtwistle School

Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 3DA

## Inspection dates

13–14 September 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and the management committee do not yet have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school.
- Leaders and the management committee have not yet put in place a carefully considered plan for improvement that accurately identifies the aspects of the school's work most in need of improvement.
- The management committee and headteacher have not ensured that they have an accurate, up-to-date understanding of the achievement of pupils in the school, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The management committee is not holding leaders to account for the performance of the school. It does not demand the information it needs to provide effective challenge and support so that it can help the school to rapidly improve.
- Despite pupils having a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, too few pupils put their knowledge into practice in the world beyond the school gate.
- Leaders have not ensured that they provide comprehensive information on the website about the school, including information relating to special educational needs and governance.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement, because pupils are not set sufficiently challenging targets to make sure that they catch up quickly.

### The school has the following strengths

- Key appointments of high-calibre senior leaders and teachers have already secured rapid improvements in the day-to-day running of the school.
- Senior leaders have wasted no time in establishing a culture that has high expectations for pupils' learning, behaviour and attendance.
- The school provides high-quality support to pupils to overcome personal challenges so that they can make the most of their educational opportunities.
- The school's work to safeguard pupils is very thorough and highly effective.
- The school is successful in helping the overwhelming majority of pupils on its roll return to mainstream school.
- Staff and pupils are proud of their school and welcome the raised aspirations and expectations of leaders.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that school leaders have a well-informed strategic plan that provides clear direction for the school and is regularly reviewed so that the school focuses on the most pressing issues
  - making sure that self-evaluation is based on a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, informed by up-to-date accurate analysis of pupils' performance
  - establishing rigorous and effective systems to accurately evaluate the impact of school improvement activities
  - making sure that the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is well managed and wisely spent
  - putting in place an information management system which is fit for purpose and enables leaders and staff to know how well different groups of pupils, including the most able, are achieving, from their different starting points, across the curriculum
  - ensuring that the school's website meets statutory requirements by providing information about the school's most recent key stage 4 results, behaviour and the pupil premium grant, as well as the special educational needs information report, governance arrangements and the child protection policy.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
  - setting challenging targets for all pupils across the school, including the most able, disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which will help them catch up quickly with other pupils nationally with similar starting points
  - holding teachers more rigorously to account for the performance of the pupils they teach
  - continuing to review the curriculum to make sure that pupils follow courses and gain high-quality qualifications which facilitate their move back into mainstream school or onto post-16 provision
  - making sure that all teachers and teaching assistants are secure in their knowledge of the standards expected for pupils in the subjects they teach and support
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their literacy skills across the curriculum
  - teachers making sure that pupils understand the importance of taking heed of the advice and guidance they are given about how to keep themselves safe, including online
  - insisting that alternative providers give frequent, up-to-date, accurate information on the progress of pupils from Oswaldtwistle School who attend their provision.
- An external review of governance is recommended.
- An external review of the way in which the pupil premium is managed is also recommended.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and the management committee do not have a sufficiently accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their self-evaluation lacks rigour and is not informed by detailed analysis of the school's own performance data. As a result, leaders cannot be certain that planning for school improvement addresses those areas most in need of development.
- Senior leaders and the management committee have not ensured that data is collected and analysed so that they can compare the performance of current cohorts and groups with those from previous years. Consequently, leaders and governors are not able to evaluate the impact of their actions on the performance of groups such as disadvantaged pupils, the most able and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Senior leaders have focused on collecting the data for pupils who receive their education on the main school site. However, they have not made sure that they capture this information for all the pupils on the school's roll, regardless of where they receive most of their education.
- The management committee is not providing effective support and challenge to the school. Members of the committee have not ensured that they receive accurate, timely and relevant information about the performance of cohorts and groups of pupils across the school. As a result, they are not yet making a sufficient impact on school improvement.
- School leaders and the management committee are not yet secure in their understanding of their statutory duties, including the requirements for the publication of information on their website.
- The management committee has not held school leaders to account for the impact of the pupil premium grant. Leaders have not developed a strategy in respect of the allocation, nor have they measured the impact and effect of their expenditure. While leaders are able to demonstrate the positive outcomes for individual pupils, they have no in-depth understanding as to whether outcomes for disadvantaged pupils as a whole are improving.
- While leaders have provided high-quality in-house training for teachers to improve their classroom practice, too few teachers and teaching assistants have had opportunities to observe best practice in other schools, as recommended at the most recent monitoring inspection.
- Since the last inspection, the new leadership team has, quite rightly, focused on putting in place basic systems and procedures that have transformed the culture of the school. Their willingness to 'roll their sleeves up' and show how things need to be done has made sure that pupils and staff are in no doubt about the raised expectations for behaviour, attendance and learning. Staff, pupils and external agencies working with the school all recognise the improvements.
- The two recently appointed deputy headteachers have been pivotal in making Oswaldtwistle School a place of learning. They have clearly communicated their high expectations for the progress of every pupil regardless of how long pupils attend the school. In the relatively short time since their appointment, they have made noticeable

improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and behaviour.

- The management committee has made some key appointments since the previous inspection. These recently appointed members of staff, including the two deputy headteachers, the teacher in charge of special educational needs, and subject specialist teachers are ably supporting leaders to eliminate the legacy of low expectations and aspirations for pupils.
- Leaders have introduced a more rigorous performance management system. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact on the quality of teaching. In reviewing targets, it was clear to inspectors that leaders have strengthened the focus on teachers' impact on pupils' academic progress.
- The deputy headteachers have developed a curriculum that is fit for purpose for a majority of pupils. They have embraced the challenge of devising a curriculum model that supports pupils on short-term placements to be well prepared for their return to mainstream school, as well as those pupils who remain with the school until the end of Year 11.
- The deputy headteachers are in the process of developing the curriculum further for older pupils, so that they can gain qualifications and experience which will stand them in good stead to move onto education, employment and training. Senior leaders have adjusted the subjects available for this academic year to include well-recognised, high-quality qualifications including GCSE geography, citizenship and BTEC construction.
- The school has recently introduced the Archbishop of York Youth Trust's Young Leaders Award programme at both key stages 3 and 4, as well as extending the enrichment sessions on a Wednesday afternoon to include cookery, jewellery making, forest school and Young Enterprise. As a result, most pupils access an increasingly broad and balanced curriculum that contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. High-quality teaching in citizenship helps pupils to develop a better understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy.
- The assessment of pupils on entry is now more rigorous and ensures that pupils' needs are quickly identified. Personalised programmes are drawn up so that pupils are well supported to address their different needs, which often limit their success in mainstream schools. As a result, most pupils, including the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make a success of their time at Oswaldtwistle School and move back into a mainstream or special school, or onto further education or training.

## **Governance of the school**

- The management committee has not ensured that it has an accurate view of the school's performance, informed by a range of sources. Nor has it ensured that leaders are tackling the most pressing issues or whether their actions are making a positive difference.
- The management committee has not taken decisive and urgent action to ensure that any barriers to securing rapid improvements are removed, including making sure that leaders have an information management system which is fit for purpose.
- Since the previous inspection, new appointments to the management committee have recruited members with a wealth of skills, experience and expertise. While the management committee has shown that it is capable of making some difficult decisions

to secure the best interests of the school, there is still much more to be done if the committee is to fulfil all its roles and responsibilities.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has rigorous and robust systems that are consistently applied across all sites. Senior leaders ensure that adults' suitability to work with children is checked prior to appointment. All staff are up to date with their training. The culture of vigilance, which permeates all sites, ensures that pupils are safe and well cared for. Staff know pupils extremely well and the school undertakes some excellent work with groups and individuals to help them understand how to keep themselves safe, with particular regard to their different vulnerabilities. The tenacious designated safeguarding lead has developed good partnerships with other agencies, maintains detailed records and follows up thoroughly on all referrals. She visits pupils attending alternative provision on a weekly basis and checks their attendance daily. Pupils are confident that they are safe and well cared for.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Senior leaders have only recently required teachers to report pupils' attainment and progress following assessment of pupils' learning for the subjects they are currently studying. In these early days, some teachers are unclear about what pupils should know to reach the standards expected. As a result, some teachers are not planning work that moves pupils' learning forward quickly enough.
- Senior leaders have set most pupils academic targets in all the subjects they are studying. However, the targets are not sufficiently ambitious to ensure that pupils, many of whom have lost ground since the end of key stage 2, catch up quickly enough. Too many pupils are unclear what they need to know and be able to do to achieve their target.
- While the deputy headteacher has been providing a range of training which has clearly made a positive difference to the quality of teaching, the school's own evaluation has been too generous because it has not taken sufficient account of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- While in most subjects and classes, teaching helps to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, there are still subjects and classes in which pupils do not make sufficient progress. Although senior leaders have already identified those members of staff whose performance is weaker and have put support in place, leaders recognise that improvements are not happening quickly enough in all cases.
- Despite the increased emphasis on improving pupils' basic skills, senior leaders have not put in place effective measures to ensure that the teaching of reading and writing, in particular, is embedded across the curriculum.
- Too few teachers and teaching assistants have had access to high-quality training or opportunities to see for themselves what good practice looks like in their own school as well as the best schools locally. Consequently, too many teachers and teaching assistants do not have the deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they

teach or support.

- Some teachers are overly reliant on tests and schemes of work that are not well suited to the pupils they teach. In these cases, pupils quickly become disinterested and disengage from learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants enjoy excellent relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are generally punctual to lessons, listen attentively and take pride in their work. Staff are highly skilled in identifying any signs that a pupil's behaviour may be starting to impact negatively on their learning or distract others, and typically get them to quickly behave properly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about the positive difference to their classroom practice made by the deputy headteacher. The regular meetings that the deputy headteacher holds with individual members of staff to review lessons and pupils' work are helping teachers to plan more effectively so that they make better use of lesson time and design more tasks which enthuse pupils to learn.
- Teachers' and teaching assistants' focus on helping pupils to develop key skills such as perseverance and resilience is contributing well to improving rates of progress for pupils as they make better use of their lesson time.
- The recruitment of subject specialist teachers in humanities, construction, physical education and citizenship, in addition to the recently appointed English and mathematics teachers, is already making a positive difference. These teachers have brought with them sound subject knowledge. They are able to plan lessons which engage and enthuse pupils because these lessons are well pitched to suit pupils' needs. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher used skilful questioning to assess a pupil's understanding, swiftly reshaping her explanation with a real-life scenario, which helped the pupil grasp the tricky concept being taught.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Despite the school's intensive work with pupils to ensure that they are well informed about how to keep themselves safe in the outside world, too many pupils pay scant regard to the advice and guidance they receive and continue to engage in risky behaviours, including online.
- Pupils talked to inspectors about the constraints of the high levels of adult support. Inspectors agree with pupils that there are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own conduct and learning. As a result, those pupils who are getting ready to return to mainstream school or move on to college are not able to practise self-regulating their behaviour or working independently.
- Staff greet pupils warmly each day and at the start of lessons. Pupils appreciate the interest adults show in them and, almost always, treat them with respect. The well-established use of approaches to resolve conflicts so that any incidents are dealt with in a considered way helps the pupils better understand how to deal with issues.
- Pupils treat each other with tolerance and respect. For example, pupils told inspectors that racist and homophobic name-calling and bullying is very rare as pupils respect and

value each other's differences.

- The school offers a wealth of support to help pupils address their individual health and well-being needs. The curriculum offer for all pupils includes personal, social, health and economic education as well as sessions that focus on nurture and well-being.
- Teachers make good use of the daily morning registration periods to address issues as they arise, and pupils appreciate the access they have to the school counsellor for one-to-one sessions. In addition, the school makes good use of its excellent relationships with external agencies to refer pupils to specialist services, including advice on drug and alcohol misuse. This makes a positive difference to pupils' engagement in education.
- The recent appointment of a specialist physical education teacher as well as a learning mentor who facilitates gym sessions means that pupils have plenty of opportunities to engage in exercise.
- Key stage 4 pupils are also able to make use of the school's food technology facilities to work towards a BTEC in home-cooking skills as preparation for their future lives.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of learning, whether that is a move to school, college or training. Staff ensure that pupils' programmes are personalised to help them realise their aspirations.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although senior leaders have successfully put systems in place so that the school is now calm and orderly, they have not ensured that the policy reflects this practice. Leaders have not analysed behaviour patterns and trends so that they can be sure that they are focusing on the most pressing issues. While staff and pupils report a positive shift in pupils' behaviour, leaders have not yet reviewed the frequency with which different sanctions, including detention, are being used, and the effectiveness of each in improving pupils' behaviour.
- Despite the diligent attendance officer ensuring that she has up-to-date information for all pupils, leaders have failed to use this information well. Leaders are unaware of the difference in rates of attendance between the previous two academic years and the underlying reasons for the overall decline. Moreover, no formal analysis has been undertaken to identify patterns and trends for the different sites, cohorts and groups.
- Many of the pupils were permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion from their previous school. Within a very short space of time, the overwhelming majority of pupils conform to clear boundaries set by senior leaders, including the recently implemented school uniform policy.
- The school keeps a close eye on pupils who receive their education at alternative providers. Most of these pupils are successful in these settings and many pupils secure places at these colleges when they leave.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. During the inspection pupils greeted inspectors warmly, held doors open for them and were keen to share their positive experiences at the school.
- The introduction of consistent expectations, clear boundaries, and manageable rewards and sanctions is making a positive difference for most pupils. Most pupils now respond quickly to staff instructions, treat adults and their peers with respect and encourage

each other to make good choices. One pupil who successfully transferred into a local school has now been appointed as a prefect.

- Almost all pupils improve their rates of attendance when they join the school, including pupils attending alternative provision. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils arrive on time to school and are punctual to lessons.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- The school has limited assessment information on pupils' attainment and progress. Leaders have only recently introduced the systematic collection of pupils' progress information and it does not include information for pupils on all the different school sites, including alternative provision.
- While the school has now installed an information management system to enable leaders to store, analyse and retrieve information about the pupils, the data has not yet been inputted. This means that leaders do not yet have the tools that allow them to easily keep track of pupils' progress and compare the performance of different cohorts and groups.
- Although the deputy headteacher responsible for assessment has put in place interim arrangements for tracking pupils, too much time is wasted analysing data manually. Moreover, the headteacher and management committee do not have the information they need to check that individuals, groups and year groups across all subjects are making strong progress from their different starting points.
- The deputy headteachers have introduced targets for pupils attending the provision run by the school across all subjects. However, these targets are not sufficiently ambitious for pupils to catch up with their peers with the same starting points.
- Leaders do not have the assessment information to be able to make comparisons between the outcomes in 2016 and previous years. In 2016, most pupils gained a qualification in mathematics and English. However, very few pupils sat GCSE examinations in these subjects. The new mathematics and English teachers are already ensuring that more of the current cohort of pupils will be ready to sit public examinations next summer.
- Most pupils gained some recognised qualifications in 2016 that enabled them to secure places on the college courses of their choice. The school's offer of short courses ensures that pupils gain qualifications regardless of how long they stay at the school. For example, a number of pupils gained awards in geography, physical education and construction last year. The school works hard to support those pupils who join midway through key stage 4 to complete coursework and sit examinations. For example, last year, the school helped two pupils to secure passes in GCSE art.
- Inspectors found that not all teachers are secure in their understanding of the school's new assessment system that has been introduced this term, the requirements of the national curriculum which became statutory in September 2014 and the requirements of the reformed GCSE examinations.
- The school has not given sufficient attention to the use of the additional funding available for the support of those pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Although leaders ensure that teachers know who those pupils are, they have not considered how they can best use the funding for each of those pupils, particularly the

most able, and they have failed to keep a close eye on how well this group are getting on.

- For all the different groups, the school is successful in its aim to support pupils 'to overcome their difficulties and successfully access continuing education, training or employment post-16, thus markedly improving their life chances'. During the past 12 months, nearly 90% of the pupils who were placed at the school because they were at risk of permanent exclusion went back into mainstream school. A similar proportion of pupils with medical needs were also helped to return to school. Over half the pupils who had been permanently excluded moved onto another school following their placements at Oswaldtwistle.
- Over the past 18 months, the school has improved its provision for the significant group of children looked after who are on its roll. The school is making more effective use of the additional funding for these pupils so that they are making more progress, increasing their attendance and improving their behaviour.
- Most pupils joining the school are working below age-related expectations as a result of a disrupted education. Many of the pupils in both key stage 3 and key stage 4 have made no progress, or regressed from the standards they achieved at the end of key stage 2 in their previous schools. The majority of pupils join the school in key stage 4 and many of those in Year 11.
- When they join the school, a number of pupils have special educational needs that have been either unrecognised or not addressed. The highly capable teacher-in-charge of special educational needs has wasted no time in identifying these pupils and taking swift action to secure the most appropriate provision to meet pupils' individual needs. Consequently, some pupils have now moved to specialist provision or are receiving the support they need to help them access college courses. This teacher has put in place detailed learning profiles so that teachers are better equipped to meet the needs of those pupils who continue their education at Oswaldtwistle School.
- Almost all the pupils who attended the school in Year 11 last year have moved onto education, employment or training. Pupils who are currently in Year 11 talked to inspectors about the help the school is giving them to realise their aspirations. Pupils are confident that, whether they want to stay at Oswaldtwistle School to gain qualifications to secure a college placement for vocational training or to catch up with their learning so they can carry on with their GCSE courses back in their mainstream school, they are receiving the support they need.

## School details

Unique reference number	134127
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10019818

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Ian Duerden
Headteacher	Elaine Hillary
Telephone number	01254 231553
Website	<a href="http://www.oswaldtwistle.org">www.oswaldtwistle.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:elaine.hillary@oswaldtwistle.org">elaine.hillary@oswaldtwistle.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	18–19 November 2014

## Information about this school

- The school has one main site. In addition, small groups and individual pupils are taught in two community centres.
- The school caters for boys and girls who have been permanently excluded from school or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. In addition, the local authority commissions teaching for pupils with medical needs who are not attending school, as well as places for pupils who are not on the roll of a mainstream school.
- An increasing number of pupils have an education, health and care plan. A number of pupils are in the process of assessment for a plan.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium is above the national average. A quarter of the pupils are looked after by the local authority. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

- A small number of alternative providers are used to complement the education provided by the school: Accrington and Rossendale College, Burnley College and The Alternative School.
- Since the school's previous inspection, a new headteacher and chair of the governing body have been appointed and the senior leadership team has been restructured.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the school's most recent key stage 4 results, the measures determined by the headteacher under section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the pupil premium grant, the special educational needs information report, governance arrangements and the child protection policy on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work during visits to classrooms, scrutinised samples of pupils' work from the previous academic year and talked with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors observed behaviour around the school, including observing pupils as they arrived at school, and during break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation provided by the school including self-evaluation by leaders; the school improvement plan; information on attendance; documents used to record behaviour and safeguarding concerns; information relating to pupils' progress; case studies of pupils and minutes of meetings of the management committee.
- An inspector visited one of the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors visited the main school site as well as a community centre used by the school to teach individual pupils and small groups.
- Inspectors met with members of the management committee and a representative from the local authority.
- An inspector spoke to the local authority's virtual headteacher for children looked after.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff and two groups of pupils, and took account of responses by 16 staff to the Ofsted questionnaire. In addition to the results of the school's own recent survey of parents, inspectors considered the one parental response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doris Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Holmes	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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