

St Luke's School

Cricklade Road, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 7AS

Inspection dates

2–3 November 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

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is inadequate. The behaviour of pupils is poor. Pupils do not learn how to control their emotions. A large number continue to be aggressive to adults and each other.
- The work of the school, including safeguarding policies and practices, was externally assessed in the last academic year. Some changes were made as a result. However, improvements have not been rapid or effective enough.
- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Standards and expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. All groups of pupils fail to make the progress they should in a range of subjects.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils. It does not help prepare pupils for future sustained employment or life in modern Britain.
- Teachers do not demand enough of pupils. Work is not well matched to pupils' abilities and behaviour in lessons is poorly managed.
- Leaders have not made the required improvements identified in the previous inspection of February 2014. Pupil attendance remains too low.
- Until recently, governors have failed to hold leaders and managers at all levels to account with sufficient rigour. They have not evaluated the impact of the Year 7 catch-up funding, the pupil premium funding or the accuracy of information provided to them, for example on pupils' achievement.
- The governing body and local authority have not sufficiently challenged the school about the high levels of absconding or the excessive numbers of fixed-term exclusions and use of physical restraint.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff and pupil relationships are friendly and supportive during breakfast club. Pupils appreciate this positive start to the school day.
- The new nurture groups are helping pupils to remain calm and ready to learn.
- Pupils are beginning to take pride in their appearance and arrive at school wearing the correct uniform.
- The new chair of governors, executive headteacher and head of school have a clear and focused vision for the school. They know what needs to be done and how to go about it.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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?

- Urgently improve safeguarding by:
 - making sure that pupils' non-attendance is always followed up promptly and not making assumptions about the whereabouts of pupils not in school
 - eliminating the potential for pupils to abscond from the site during the school day
 - providing further training for all staff in de-escalation techniques and ensure that they use them before engaging in physical intervention.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - making sure that leaders work with rigour and urgency to bring about rapid improvements in safeguarding procedures and that governors rigorously hold leaders and managers to account for their successful implementation
 - ensuring that all school leaders routinely analyse and accurately report the information they have about pupils so that governors have a clear understanding about pupils' academic progress and personal development, and using this information to forestall underachievement and respond to shortfalls swiftly and effectively
 - making sure that the curriculum is fit for purpose so that all pupils can achieve well and make good progress, particularly in their behaviour, personal development and well-being
 - ensuring that governors robustly evaluate the impact that the Year 7 catch-up funding is having on helping pupils to catch up in English and mathematics
 - ensuring that governors robustly evaluate the impact that the pupil premium funding has on improving the outcomes and personal development of the most disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment by:
 - making sure that teaching staff and adults who support pupils in lessons have the right subject knowledge and behaviour management skills to enable lessons to be safe, enjoyable learning experiences
 - ensuring that accurate assessment information is used to plan work that matches the learning needs of different groups of pupils, so that the most able pupils are challenged and those who struggle with their learning are supported and guided to reach their potential
 - making sure that adults have high expectations so that pupils are fully engaged in their learning and are well prepared for life in modern Britain

- accurately identifying pupils' knowledge and understanding when they join the school so that gaps in learning are identified and filled.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - significantly reducing the need for fixed-term exclusion, use of internal isolation and physical intervention
 - improving the attendance of pupils and reducing the proportion who are persistently absent or who abscond.
- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in English, mathematics and science, by:
 - reducing the time lost through fixed-term exclusions and pupils' absence from school and lessons
 - rigorously checking that all pupils and groups of pupils are making at least expected rates of progress from their starting points
 - improving careers support and pupils' employability by giving all pupils equal access to work-related learning.

An external review of governance, including the school's use of the Year 7 catch-up fund and pupil premium fund, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- There have been sustained, systemic weaknesses in leadership and management. None of the areas for improvement set out in the previous inspection report of February 2014 have been tackled successfully or with sufficient urgency. Until recently, leadership roles and responsibilities were not clearly understood, resulting in a lack of accountability.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour and what they can achieve are too low. Staff do not appreciate the amount of change that needs to take place in order for the school to be a safe and purposeful place in which to work and learn. There is an urgent need to radically change the ethos of the school and in particular the ways in which behaviour is managed.
- Staff have received recent training in safeguarding. However, they do not have the skills necessary to de-escalate episodes of poor behaviour that present a risk to pupils' safety.
- The school's curriculum is not fit for purpose. It does not match the needs of pupils or provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are very few extra-curricular activities available. Tutor time, almost an hour a day, is not used effectively. Pupils are not sufficiently prepared for the opportunities and experiences of life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils too often act inappropriately and do not follow the rule of law.
- The school leaders collect information about pupils' behaviour and attendance. However, this information is stored rather than used to drive improvements. Analysis of school information at all levels is exceptionally weak. For example, patterns and potential links between lateness, absconding, absenteeism (from school and lessons), detentions, isolation, exclusions (internal and fixed-term external) and rewards achieved or academic progress are not identified.
- The vision and high aspirations of the new chair of the governing body, executive headteacher and new head of school are suitably ambitious. They are fully aware of what needs to be done and in what order. They have instigated changes such as ensuring that pupils take greater pride in their appearance and wear the correct uniform. However, they have not yet had time to have the required impact on those significant weak aspects of the school's work. Resources are tight; the school remains in financial deficit.

Governance of the school

- Governance is inadequate. Governors have not ensured that the school's policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Safeguarding procedures, including attendance and behaviour, are not adequately reviewed and evaluated by senior leaders and governors. As a result, safeguarding is ineffective. Little attention has been paid to the outcomes of national serious case reviews. Consequently, lessons are not being learned from them, with fixed-term exclusions becoming the norm rather than the exception.

Governors have not challenged the exclusion rates, the number of pupils absconding, poor pupil attendance, the use of physical restraint and levels of detentions and isolation.

- Governors do not always receive information from leaders in a way that helps them challenge leaders' assertions about the quality of the school's work, particularly those related to pupils' academic progress.
- The tracking and evaluation of the use of Year 7 catch-up funding and pupil premium funding is inadequate.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. School leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils are safe. Risk assessments are often too generic and are not effectively used to inform pupils' behaviour plans. Records are kept relating to attendance and behaviour but the records are not used to analyse patterns or drive improvements. When pupils arrive in the morning and leave at the end of the school day they are carefully supervised by staff. The school is secured by a high fence and locked gates. However, pupils scale these obstacles and abscond.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching over time, pupils make inadequate progress. Teachers do not have an accurate knowledge of pupils' prior learning. The lack of effective assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress from their individual starting points hinders teachers' ability to set work for pupils at the right level.
- Teachers' and other adults' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are too low. As a result, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work they are given.
- Adults are inconsistent in the management of pupils' behaviour. Persistent low- and high-level disruption hampers progress and stops learning. Too often pupils unilaterally choose to leave lessons, mainly in English and mathematics, and do not catch up on the work they have missed. The sanctions and rewards systems are not effective, which means that very poor behaviour has become the norm.
- Work produced by pupils receives positive, if superficial, encouragement from staff. However, pupils do not know how to make improvements or corrections, nor are they able to take further steps in their learning. They are not learning from their mistakes.
- Poor use is made of tutor time to reinforce core learning skills and enhance pupils' personal development. Tutor time, almost an hour a day, is spread throughout the school day and is intended to provide a 'nurturing' time. However, staff do not take advantage of this time effectively, particularly to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
- Learning and behaviour are better supported in the 'nurture groups' in Years 7 and 8. In these groups, pupils are more engaged in purposeful learning activities, and develop self-confidence and the ability to express themselves.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Expectations of punctuality to school are too lax. When pupils are late because their taxis or buses have been delayed by traffic, this is not appropriately recorded. The school does not monitor this situation and whether it has a negative impact on behaviour because pupils have missed a supported start to the day. It also means that these pupils are sometimes missing a considerable period of time out of their school day.
- The curriculum is not successfully supporting or promoting pupils' personal development and welfare. Posters and displays show that some aspects of the curriculum relating to personal, social and health education are taught. However, the school does not review the curriculum effectively enough to ensure that there is full and regular coverage of subjects and topics that pupils need to know about. Without this mapping, leaders cannot determine the effectiveness of what is being taught. In discussion, pupils could not articulate to inspectors how to keep themselves safe and too many pupils continue to engage in risky and unsafe behaviours.
- Pupils' individual risk assessments do not sufficiently link with their personal education plans or their education, health and care plans. These assessments are not used to construct a behaviour plan that is then used in lessons to improve behaviour or avoid risk. Pupils' individual risk assessments, along with other risk assessments, are often too generic and sometimes do not provide a suitable method for mitigation of an identified risk. They are not shared with staff at the other provision used by the school, the Swindon Tuition Centre, to ensure that appropriate support continues.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is not sufficiently analysed and reported on after they have been involved in or have witnessed serious incidents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Very poor behaviour is the norm.
- Work set by teachers is not at the right levels for the pupils' needs and levels of ability. Their behaviour is not managed well, which results in too much low- and high-level disruption to learning. Staff do not understand that a rapid change in pupil management is urgently needed.
- Too often in lessons, pupils do not listen to adults or remove themselves from class at will. A large number of pupils are frequently aggressive towards adults and each other. This results in extremely high levels of physical restraint, fixed-term external exclusions, detentions and use of internal isolation rooms. The sanctions and rewards policy, although followed by staff, is not fit for purpose. It has little positive impact on improving pupils' behaviour and the need to use sanctions is not decreasing.
- Behaviour is better in the Swindon Tuition Centre. This is a very small provision, with generally one-to-one support. Pupils are not disrupted by the poor behaviour of others during their lessons. Good behaviour is expected. Pupils who use this provision are generally on reduced timetables. However, the whereabouts of these part-time pupils when they leave for home during the school day is not sufficiently checked.

- Some pupils make the wrong choices and enter the criminal justice system while of school age; insufficient attention is given through the curriculum to developing pupils' resilience and helping them to resist negative influences.
- Pupils' conduct at the start of the school day in breakfast club is good. Staff and pupils mix together, convivially sharing the day's news and previous night's events with humour and interest. This sets a good social and 'family-style nurturing' start to the school day.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils typically enter the school with levels of attainment that are well below those seen nationally. Pupils currently in the school, as in the past, are not making sufficient progress across a broad range of subjects.
- Until this term, pupils have not had their knowledge, skills and understanding checked when they join the school. This lack of accurate checks does not enable staff or leaders to measure the progress made by different groups of pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, those in the care of the local authority, girls and those who joined the school in different year groups.
- Too many pupils either do not attend often enough or, when they do, do not remain in class long enough to make sufficient progress in their learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In addition, pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not effectively developed throughout the curriculum. Pupils have very few phonic strategies to help them when reading challenging words.
- The vast majority of the pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Too many pupils leave school without the qualifications that they should, and could, achieve. The most able pupils tend to be entered for more courses in Years 10 and 11, but these are not always at the right level for their ability. Those who struggle with their learning leave school with qualifications that will not help them gain sustained employment in later life.
- There has been an increase in the number of pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 11 successfully finding a place in further education or employment with training. However, the school does not provide pupils with external, impartial careers advice. Most pupils leave school to attend Swindon College, but without the school ensuring that the most able pupils are choosing, or being accepted on, courses that are suitably challenging.
- The contribution that work experience and work-related learning make to pupils' achievements varies. This is because not all pupils have an equal opportunity to participate in work-related activities.
- Although newly formed, the nurture groups in Years 7 and 8 are beginning to show that the pupils attending them feel more settled and ready to learn.
- Pupils who attend the Swindon Tuition Centre receive effective one-to-one support for the development of basic skills in English and mathematics. The amount of progress that they make is limited by the amount of time that they attend and is further restricted by the range of subjects provided. Consequently, although learning is better here, pupils' achievements across a wide range of subjects are inadequate.

School details

Unique reference number	126547
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10005788

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Colledge
Executive headteacher	Mags Clarke
Telephone number	01793 705566
Website	www.stlukes.swindon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stlukes.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about, among other things, the curriculum, the Year 7 catch-up funding, the pupil premium funding and the complaints procedures.
- The school does not meet the Department for Education’s requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. Omissions include information about the curriculum, the Year 7 catch-up funding, the pupil premium funding and the complaints procedures. The school is in the process of ratifying up-to-date policies, including those regarding safeguarding. The ones on the website are not up to date and the website is currently under construction.
- St Luke’s works with children identified as having social, emotional and mental health issues. All pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. In addition to their primary need, many of the pupils have additional needs such as an autism spectrum condition, communication difficulties and cognitive interruption. There are 77 places available, with 71 pupils currently on roll.

The vast majority of pupils are White British boys.

- All pupils in Year 7 are entitled to the Year 7 catch-up funding. Just over two thirds of pupils are disadvantaged.
- Interim leadership arrangements put in place around Easter 2016 have recently been made permanent. An executive headteacher, who is the substantive headteacher of a local special school, has been appointed and a new chair of governors was elected in September 2016. A head of school joined the school on 31 October 2016.
- The school sends a few pupils to the Swindon Tuition Centre, for mathematics and English. Some pupils also visit the educational farm at Crowdys Hill School to learn about different aspects of animal care.
- A number of pupils are educated part time, in agreement with their parents, as part of their induction plan when joining the school. These arrangements are generally for those new pupils who have previously been out of formal education for some time.
- Each school day starts with a communal breakfast club. There are no after-school activities or clubs.
- The vast majority of pupils arrive to school using local authority transport.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes, mainly together with senior staff. Pupils' work was scrutinised and their records reviewed, including education, health and care plans and personal education plans. Records and case studies relating to pupils in the care of the local authority and those who are vulnerable due to their circumstances were also considered.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and the checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children. The school's admissions and attendance registers were evaluated. Further evidence was gathered from the school's information on pupils' current progress, behaviour and attendance. School improvement plans, the minutes of the meetings of governors and the school's records of the checks made on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment were also reviewed.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils as they arrived at the school, during break and lunchtimes, and as they left the school premises at the end of the day, as well as in lessons. Discussions were held informally with pupils during the course of the inspection and after an inspector listened to them read.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, other senior leaders, other school leaders, teachers and support staff. Further discussions were held with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and the head of education for Swindon local authority.
- The views of the 15 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) were considered. There were no responses to the Ofsted questionnaires from staff or pupils.
- An inspector visited the off-site tuition provision, observed pupils' learning there and spoke with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Steffi Penny, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martyn Groucutt

Ofsted Inspector

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