

Werneth School

Harrytown, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 3BX

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of senior and subject leadership over time has been inconsistent. As a result, pupils, including the disadvantaged, have not made the progress of which they are capable.
- Some school plans lack timelines and precise criteria by which leaders, including governors, can judge the pace and impact of their actions.
- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough and therefore limit their opportunities to learn and achieve.
- Some pupils do not take enough pride in their work. Careless mistakes and poor organisation impede their learning.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Some teachers do not plan work which matches pupils' capabilities or prior learning. In some subjects at key stage 3 too much learning repeats what pupils have already achieved in primary school.
- Some teachers set too many undemanding tasks such as copying.
- Teachers do not routinely follow up missing work and some accept work that is too careless and untidy.
- The minor misdemeanours and attention-seeking behaviour of some pupils disrupts learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Despite making difficult decisions to balance the previous deficit budget, the headteacher and his senior leadership team have gained the trust and respect of pupils, staff, parents and governors.
- Leaders, including governors, have made good use of rigorous appraisal to inform staffing decisions and improve the quality of teaching.
- Pupils are proud that this is a school where every difference is respected.
- School leaders have now put in place a broad and balanced curriculum which gives pupils the opportunity to achieve better overall progress scores.
- Some teaching effectively builds on what pupils have already achieved and inspires them to behave well, do their very best and achieve the results of which they are capable.
- Staff ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan programmes of work which take into account pupils' capabilities and prior attainment
 - eliminating the setting of low-level activities and work which is a repetition of what pupils have already achieved in primary school
 - making sure that all staff are tenacious in following up pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, who leave classwork and homework unfinished and whose standard of work is negatively affected by unnecessary careless mistakes and weak presentation.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - securing better attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils whose attendance falls below 90%
 - ensuring that all leaders and teachers consistently and firmly tackle and eradicate disruption to lessons caused by the silly behaviour of some pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - presenting information on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour more clearly and concisely so that staff and leaders, including governors, can better use it in planning for improvement
 - ensuring that all plans, including those related to the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils, have timelines and very precise criteria by which leaders, including governors, can measure success
 - ensuring that all middle leaders have equally high expectations of standards and pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility.

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.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time the actions of school leaders, including governors, have resulted in pupils making weak progress across a range of subjects. Gaps in the curriculum, low attendance and too much teaching which is less than good have prevented pupils from achieving the examination results of which they are capable.
- The quality of subject leadership, although improved, remains variable. Some subject leaders do not have high enough expectations of standards of work and teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Although senior leaders gather a great deal of information about pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, they do not evaluate it concisely enough to enable swift action to address emerging weaknesses. This lack of concise evaluation has also limited opportunities for governors to challenge school leaders.
- Some school plans, particularly those intended to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils, are imprecise. Too many do not indicate the expected pace of actions and improvements. Some plans lack precise criteria by which leaders, especially governors, can judge the impact of actions.
- The way leaders have used the pupil premium funding has not had enough impact. Differences between the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils and of other pupils nationally, although diminishing, still remain too large.
- On his arrival in September 2015, the headteacher recognised that the curriculum was unsuitable. He worked with the senior leadership team so that the school now offers a suite of subjects which gives more opportunity for academic progress. School leaders have planned further improvements from September 2017, when pupils will have the opportunity to study a greater number of vocational subjects.
- It was not possible to change options for those pupils in last year's Year 10 and Year 11 who had already embarked on GCSE courses. This is likely to have a negative effect on the school's overall progress scores in 2017 and 2018 but not on the grades achieved by individual pupils.
- The curriculum for pupils from the current Year 7 to Year 10 is now broad and balanced and offers pupils the opportunity to study two languages and three separate sciences. The number of pupils choosing these options and being entered for the English Baccalaureate is now increasing year on year. The revised curriculum maintains the school's long-standing strength in visual and performing arts.
- Pupils benefit from a wide variety of sporting and cultural extra-curricular activities, including educational visits abroad. The life learning programme, religious education, themed days and assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally and socially. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and leadership roles.
- Staff have mapped the promotion of fundamental British values across all subjects. Staff and pupils promote equality and diversity of every kind so that the school is a welcoming environment for all.
- Leaders have used literacy and numeracy catch-up funding well. A significant number

of pupils who began Year 7 with low literacy and numeracy skills have already caught up with their peers.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because leaders analyse their needs in detail and target funding well to provide appropriate support.
- School leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have welcomed reviews from external sources such as the local authority and a local teaching school and have used them to plan for improvement.
- Leaders, including governors, have challenged poor performance and have used the appraisal process and continuing professional development to eradicate the weakest teaching. Recent changes in the rigour of monitoring teaching are beginning to have an impact on the significant amount of teaching which still requires some improvement.
- The school has maintained strong pastoral arrangements for effective transition for pupils from Year 6. Leaders have recently put in place stronger systems for academic transition which headteachers of feeder primary schools have praised. However, these arrangements are not yet having a positive impact in all subjects.

Governance of the school

- Since the arrival of the headteacher there have been significant changes in the composition of the governing body, including the appointment of two new chairs of the governing body who hold the post jointly. Governors bring a range of educational and professional skills to their role and attend meetings regularly. They undertake all statutory duties and ensure that all pupils and staff are safe in school. Governors are determined to improve educational outcomes and where they have gaps in knowledge have sought external support and training. Performance information is now provided at least seven days prior to meetings which allows governors sufficient time to review and consider the information in advance. Minutes of the most recent meetings show that they are now in a better position to hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, discharge their safeguarding duties well and ensure that staff training is relevant and up to date. Staff and pupils know what to do if they have concerns about physical or emotional harm to themselves or others. When appointing staff, school leaders, including governors, ensure that they carry out appropriate checks to assure themselves that all candidates are suitable for working with children. Policies and procedures are in line with the latest national guidance and leaders, including governors, regularly review them. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and mobile technology. Inspectors' discussions with pupils showed that pupils understand the dangers of the internet and of radicalisation and extremist behaviour.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too much teaching fails to promote good progress because some teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan activities which match pupils' capabilities and prior attainment. Too often, least-able pupils struggle because the work is too hard and the most able remain unchallenged. This is particularly evident in mixed-ability classes.
- In science, geography and information and communication technology (ICT) pupils are given too many undemanding tasks such as copying from text books and worksheets. Pupils in Year 7 told inspectors that some of the work they do in these subjects is a repeat of what they have already learned in primary school. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that this is the case.
- Some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, leave large amounts of classwork and homework incomplete and some teachers are not tenacious enough in following this up. Some teachers are also too accepting of unnecessarily poor presentation and careless mistakes which diminish the quality of pupils' work.
- Discussions with pupils and inspectors' observations of lessons indicate that many teachers give too many chances to pupils who disrupt the learning of others by attempts to distract the teacher and their peers. Some teachers are too slow to implement the school's behaviour policy.
- Although inspectors saw evidence of effective homework set by teachers, some parents are concerned that pupils are not given enough homework in English, mathematics or science.
- The school has prioritised maximising the impact of marking and feedback. Subject and senior leaders have closely monitored the implementation of the school's marking and feedback policy. Teachers now apply this consistently and inspectors saw many examples of feedback from teachers which resulted in improved work.
- Some teachers across a range of curriculum areas are infectiously enthusiastic about the subjects they teach. They inspire high endeavour and good behaviour. In discussions with inspectors, pupils were very positive about the skill and commitment of some of their teachers. The teaching of performing and visual arts remains a strength of the school.
- Leaders have put in place an assessment system which enables them to track pupils' progress towards targets based on key stage 2 results. Although teachers' assessments of pupils' work are moderated and accurate, in subjects other than English and mathematics some teachers have set their own targets which do not match those held by senior leadership.
- The school uses a range of strategies to improve pupils' basic literacy skills. The way in which teachers have implemented structured reading and writing schemes has improved these skills across the curriculum. In science and geography the development of technical language is weak and has a negative impact on the standard of work produced. The development of numeracy in subjects other than mathematics is in need of development.
- Most parents feel that they receive regular and accurate information about how their

children are progressing and what they need to do to help them to improve.

- During the inspection, discussions with staff and pupils indicated clearly that no one tolerates the use of derogatory or discriminatory language.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils do not understand the value of completing work to the best of their ability. They complete tasks as fast as they can and, as a consequence, make careless mistakes. In addition, some pupils do not take enough care organising their work so that they can refer back to it for revision.
- A number of pupils, particularly those in Year 7, feel vulnerable when moving along corridors because of the unthinking boisterous behaviour of some of their peers. However, apart from this issue pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and happy in school.
- Pupils, staff and parents have confidence in the school's systems to ensure that everyone is safe and well cared for. In discussions with inspectors, pupils said that they know that staff will always act quickly if they alert them to any concerns about safety or well-being.
- The school provides a nurturing environment for vulnerable pupils. Leaders of pastoral and special educational needs and/or disabilities provision make good use of external agencies to address the needs of pupils who require specialist support. Staff are assiduous in following up referrals and prioritise attending pupil review meetings.
- Leaders and teachers have developed strong systems to deal with bullying. Staff use an increasingly restorative approach so that pupils fully understand how their actions have affected others. School records, and discussions with staff and pupils, show that bullying is rare and that if it occurs staff deal with it well so that it does not happen again.
- Teachers deliver a well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum as part of the school's life learning programme. This programme ensures that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from abuse and exploitation and how to avoid extremism. Pupils know about the personal choices involved in keeping themselves physically and emotionally healthy and maintaining positive relationships.
- A wide-ranging programme of careers information, education, advice and guidance (CIEAG) begins in Year 8 so that pupils can make informed decisions about careers and which options to choose in school and in post-16 education. The school provides independent advice from an external careers service. Staff prioritise disadvantaged pupils for all aspects of CIEAG.
- Links with the Manchester United Foundation provide pupils with opportunities to develop a range of skills such as physical literacy, healthy eating and leadership. The school's link with Adidas provides pupils with opportunities to develop work-related skills and increased aspirations.

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. Regular liaison and communication ensure that staff monitor the attendance and well-being of these pupils effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils told inspectors that minor misdemeanours and silly behaviour on the part of some of their peers disrupt learning regularly. This matches what inspectors observed during the inspection.
- Although the school has a comprehensive and clear behaviour policy, some teachers are slow to implement it and allow low-level disruption to continue for too long.
- The attendance of pupils falls below national averages. For too many pupils, attendance is below 90%. This is particularly true of disadvantaged pupils. Although the school's efforts have resulted in improved attendance for some individuals, the progress of too many pupils has been limited because they miss out on important opportunities to learn and improve.
- The school has recently appointed an attendance mentor specifically to support better attendance for disadvantaged pupils. The positive impact of her work can already be seen in improved attendance figures for this group since February.
- Restorative approaches to the management of behaviour, headteacher detentions and the introduction of the 'Reflection Room' and the 'Hub for Achievement, Reflection and Tracking' have all contributed to a significant reduction in permanent and fixed-term exclusions.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- For the past three years, GCSE results over a range of subjects have been significantly below average because pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, have made weak progress in comparison with other pupils nationally who achieved the same results at the end of Year 6.
- Although the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, is improving, the difference between their progress and that of other pupils is not diminishing rapidly enough and is still too great.
- Over time, the number of pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate has been very low and the numbers achieving it even lower. This has contributed to the school's poor overall progress scores. However, significant revision of the curriculum has ensured that almost all pupils from Year 7 to Year 10 will be entered for the subjects which make up the English Baccalaureate.
- GCSE results are variable across subjects. In 2016 there were particularly strong results in performing and visual arts and particularly weak results in science, geography and ICT.
- This year the school's assessments and inspectors' scrutiny of work indicate that pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 are on track to achieve better results in most subjects, although overall progress is likely to remain low for Year 11 because these pupils have

followed the school's previous curriculum.

- In most subjects, pupils in Year 7 to Year 9 are making good progress. Most pupils entered the school with prior attainment significantly below average. In English and mathematics, as well as a range of other subjects, most are now at least in line with expectations for their age. However, progress in science, ICT and geography is still too slow.
- The school has developed thorough and secure assessment and tracking systems so that leaders, including governors, can be sure that assessment information and predicted outcomes are accurate.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because teachers analyse their needs well and provide effective support.
- Strategies to improve reading have been effective. Reading ages have improved significantly with consequent positive impact on pupils' ability to access a wide range of texts across the curriculum, particularly at key stage 3.
- As a result of effective CIEAG and good links with colleges and industry, the proportion of pupils who go on to education, employment or training at the end of Year 11 is higher than the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	106136
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10024272

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,029
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicky Howe and Gail Elms
Headteacher	Andrew Conroy
Telephone number	0161 4941222
Website	www.wernethschool.com
Email address	andrew.conroy@wernethschool.com
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Werneth School is a larger-than-average mixed 11–16 secondary comprehensive school.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is not their first language is much lower than national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national figure and the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is higher than average.
- For a small number of pupils the school uses alternative provision at Tameside College, EBC alternative provision, Highfields (Stockport’s behavioural pupil referral unit),

Pendlebury (Stockport's emotional and mental health facility) and Moathouse (Stockport's maternity unit).

- In 2016, the school was identified as a coasting school because of pupils' weak progress over the last three years.
- A local teaching school and Stockport local authority have supported the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and pupils' learning. Some of these lesson observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors met formally with six groups of pupils. An inspector heard a range of pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with a cross-section of teaching staff, middle and senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from Stockport local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of school information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors considered 30 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire), including 18 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered 41 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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