

# Warren School

Clarks Lane, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 8HT

## Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Too many pupils make inadequate progress from their starting points. Outcomes are poor.
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching. This hinders pupils' progress.
- Leaders have an over generous view of how well the school is performing. Consequently, they are not identifying weaknesses and acting on them quickly enough.
- Areas for improvement identified at the school's previous inspection continue to cause concern.
- New senior staff have not had the time to demonstrate the impact of their recent work.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous and the decline in the school's performance has not been successfully tackled.
- Teachers' use of assessment to match learning to the needs of pupils is weak.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are too low. The most able pupils do not receive the challenge they need.
- The range of subjects on offer is not broad enough to match the needs of the pupils. The curriculum does not provide enough challenge.
- In the sixth form, students underachieve. Leaders have not done enough over time to tackle poor teaching and assessment.
- The local authority's serious concerns about the leadership and management of the school are well founded.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school places a high priority on keeping pupils safe and takes effective action to achieve this.
- Children in the early years make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge.
- A caring, nurturing and supportive culture exists in school.
- Pupils behave well and are attentive in lessons.

## 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 the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - all leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this information to evaluate the school's performance and to promote improvements
  - leaders make frequent, rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, and take prompt action to bring about improvement
  - accurate assessment information is collected and used to check that pupils are on track to make better progress
  - leaders' monitoring focuses on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
  - staff receive training and support to help pupils reach their full potential.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment quickly by ensuring that teachers:
  - use appropriate schemes of work in all key stages to plan learning activities that meet the needs of the pupils
  - have high expectations of what all groups of pupils can achieve, particularly the most able
  - use assessment information so that all groups of pupils are appropriately challenged by their work.
- Ensure that the very recent developments in the sixth form are sustained and improved on, so that all students make at least good progress and are well prepared for their next steps of education, employment or social care-funded provision.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The local authority issued the school with a warning notice in May 2017 stating: 'There has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, standards of performance.'
- The local authority has kept a careful watch on the school, taking action to intervene formally when matters began to deteriorate. The support provided has helped the school to operate safely on a daily basis.
- The capacity for improvement is limited. Leaders have not made the required improvements over a long period of time. Leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to ensure an acceptable standard of education across all of the key stages. It is too early to see any impact of the recent work on pupils' achievement.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is overgenerous and does not reflect where the school currently is. This hinders leaders' sense of urgency about how quickly the school must improve.
- Leaders have been too slow to improve pupils' outcomes, particularly in the sixth form. They have introduced a system for tracking pupils' progress but have failed to verify that teachers' assessments are accurate across all of the key stages.
- Until recently, leaders have not checked pupils' learning with sufficient rigour to gain a clear understanding of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- The school's assessment information is not used well by leaders to overcome weaknesses in pupils' learning and to decide on plans for improvement. Leaders have recognised the need to develop this, but plans are at an early stage.
- In the past, leaders did not use the performance management of staff well enough to improve provision and raise standards. Leaders have recently established a more formal system of performance management to promote effective practice.
- Children's good progress in the early years is not built on in subsequent key stages; performance declines the longer pupils are at the school.
- Leaders have failed to identify that different groups of pupils do not make enough progress.
- The range of subjects in the sixth form has been too limited and not well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly those of the most able.
- Until recently, the wider curriculum did not challenge pupils to ensure that they learn successfully. Extra-curricular activities such as sporting events develop pupils' self-esteem and coordination skills.
- The headteacher is committed to moving the school forwards. She has endeavoured to build a leadership team with a shared vision of school improvement. This has been hampered until recently by staffing issues. She has gained the support of staff and the confidence of parents.
- The newly appointed assistant headteachers oversee key stages 2 and 3, and key stage 4 and the sixth form respectively. They have a good understanding of what

needs to improve and have developed well-judged plans to address these aspects of provision.

- The school has made effective use of the pupil premium funding to support educational visits. The Year 7 catch-up funding enhances the development of literacy and numeracy skills.
- Sports funding is used well to develop teachers' skills and to extend the range of physical activity on offer to pupils. A good range of playground equipment is available to pupils to encourage them to develop healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders have now begun to use wisely the funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, providing individualised programmes to support learning. However, over time the use of this funding has not had the necessary impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Leaders pay due regard to the promotion of British values. Pupils are typically polite and respectful to each other.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

### **Governance of the school**

- Previously, the governing body's monitoring of the work of the school was not sufficiently holding leaders to account or supporting the rapid improvement needed.
- As a result of local authority intervention, the governing body has been disbanded. An interim executive board (IEB) is now in place to provide governance. However, as members of the IEB only took up their new post in July 2017, they have not yet had the opportunity to demonstrate the impact of their work.
- The IEB has an accurate understanding of the school's performance. Minutes of meetings show that members of the IEB ask pertinent questions and are committed to bringing about the necessary change.
- The IEB provides effective challenge and support to school leaders and ensures that all statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding pupils, are met. The IEB is committed to improve the school in line with its principles and values.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Rapid action has been taken by leaders to overcome the ineffective aspects previously identified by the local authority.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy on its website, which refers to the latest statutory guidance. There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe in the school.
- Appropriate checks are made on visitors and when recruiting adults to work with children. Records are kept meticulously and are stored securely. Detailed risk assessments are in place and are carefully monitored by leaders.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding training for all staff is comprehensive and timely. Staff have a very clear understanding of what to do if they have a concern about the

welfare of a pupil.

- Leaders collaborate well with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Staff take steps to ensure that any concerns are addressed. There is a shared understanding of the need to protect pupils from potential risks.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including when using the internet and social media. Pupils said that they feel safe, and parents agree.
- The school site is safe and secure. Staff have ensured that suitable measures are in place to supervise visitors when they are on the school premises.

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

### **Inadequate**

- The quality of teaching has deteriorated since the previous inspection.
- Weak teaching in the sixth form has prevented students from achieving high enough standards at the end of Year 14. There are far too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the key stages, which hinder learning.
- Assessment information is not used well, and teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of what pupils already know. Consequently, tasks do not stretch pupils enough and the work is often too easy, especially for the most able pupils. This slows their progress.
- Activities in lessons often focus on the mechanical completion of tasks rather than on supporting the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers' questioning and guidance are not challenging enough to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils do not develop their thinking skills and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers and teaching assistants develop positive relationships with the pupils, often working one to one to build social and communication skills effectively. Pupils are respectful, and listen well to their peers and adults.
- Learning is enhanced by a wide range of additional activities and trips. Swimming and music are among the many varied activities available to pupils.
- Resources are of good quality, adapted for pupils' specific needs. The classroom environment is tidy and conducive to learning, with stimulating displays. The use of new technologies is well developed and the school provides a suitable number of computers.
- There is a core of strong practice in teaching, learning and assessment in the early years. Teachers use their accurate assessments to provide children with highly effective learning activities. As a result, they are well prepared to start Year 1.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's core values of 'respect', 'commitment' and 'everyone matters' are at the heart of all relationships and are frequently referred to by staff and pupils.
- The welfare of pupils and their personal development is of utmost importance to leaders. Leaders endorse a culture and ethos of open communication, in which pupils know that staff will listen to them and respect their views.
- Pupils' personal needs are well supported from the moment they start the school. Staff obtain a thorough understanding of the individual needs of each pupil, including their preferences and preferred means of learning.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said they feel happy, supported and safe in the school. Teachers deal with any concerns they may have. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when they use the computer.
- Pupils have a voice in the school community. The school council listens to pupils' concerns carefully. These concerns are taken seriously by the senior leadership team, and changes are made in response to pupils' requests.
- Staff liaise effectively with healthcare professionals to ensure that pupils' medical and physical needs are best met.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have clear expectations of pupils' social behaviour. All pupils are expected to respond appropriately to staff instructions. Staff use an extensive range of strategies to ensure that pupils have the best opportunities to communicate. As a result, pupils participate well in their learning.
- Lessons start punctually. They are calm, and pupils work in harmony together.
- Around the school, pupils are well mannered, friendly and courteous to each other and staff. Pupils are supervised well at all times in lessons and as they move around the school.
- Pupils play happily and safely together on the playground under careful supervision. Pupils are encouraged to participate by playing alongside others if they are not able to join in. They develop their social skills well when using the playground equipment, talking to their peers and adults. The school site is free from litter and graffiti.
- Bullying in school is very rare. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The use of derogatory language in school is scarce. Pupils said that bullying is rare and parents agree.
- Pupils attend well. Those pupils who attend less frequently have a medical reason for this. Exclusion rates are low.
- Some of the pupils are dual registered and spend time in their local mainstream school.

Attendance and progress are monitored closely.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate as a result of the shortcomings in teaching, learning and assessment and the curriculum. Apart from in the early years, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable across all of the key stages. They are not prepared well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- The most able pupils do not do as well as they should. Sufficiently challenging work for these pupils is rarely evident in lessons, so they do not get the opportunity to reach their potential. This occasionally leads to disengagement.
- The school's assessment systems have not demonstrated clear progress or helped leaders to identify the gaps in pupils' learning across all of the key stages. The school is developing new systems to halt the decline in pupils' progress, but it has taken too long for this to happen.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Work is not sufficiently well targeted to meet the needs of these pupils, and the pace of learning is too slow. The school's intervention strategies have not enabled pupils to make enough progress and develop the skills they need.
- The use of pupil premium funding in music therapy enhances pupils' communication, engagement and physical enhancement.
- The use of Year 7 catch-up funding is not making enough of a difference for pupils.
- The physical education (PE) and sport funding is spent effectively. Pupils have their skills and abilities appropriately developed.
- In 2017, key stage 4 pupils achieved bikeability level 2. Key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils studied for life and living skills but achieved no qualification. One student in key stage 5 achieved bikeability level 1.
- Pupils have not been prepared well enough for the next stage of their education. The school recognises this and is taking decisive action, but this has come too late for too many pupils.

## Early years provision

## Good

- The leader has a strong knowledge and understanding of the children in her care. Early years provision is well structured to meet children's needs and supports their introduction into school life well. Effective routines and carefully planned support ensure that children make good progress.
- Safeguarding procedures are highly effective. Children are kept safe in a calm, supportive environment with opportunities to play indoors and outside.
- Teaching is good. Staff get to know children quickly and develop positive relationships with them. These relationships support good communication and behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants frequently use conversations and discussions to effectively promote the speech and language skills of children.

- Staff know and understand children's needs very well, providing high-quality care and support. Lessons are well planned and delivered. Children receive the personal and academic support they need to be happy, feel safe and do well.
- The curriculum is personalised and matched well to children's levels of understanding. Assessment of children's learning is thorough. Records build up a comprehensive picture of each child's progress in all areas of learning, and this is used effectively to plan their next steps in learning.
- Leaders use supplementary funds for disadvantaged pupils appropriately to ensure that additional support is directed to those who need it most.
- Children in the early years are making the progress they are capable of in developing their reading, writing and number skills. Activities provide challenge and appeal to children. Children are encouraged to take the next steps to develop their knowledge further. Most start Year 1 well prepared for the challenges ahead.
- The communication and advice provided by the school helps parents to know how they can support activities and skills at home.
- The outdoor learning area is not maintained to a high standard. As a result, children cannot always apply their learning to their play outside.

### **16 to 19 study programmes**

### **Inadequate**

- Leadership in the sixth form is not effective. The provision for students in the sixth form has not enabled them to make sufficient progress.
- Leaders do not monitor the quality of the provision in the sixth form with sufficient rigour to ensure a culture of aspiration.
- The range of subjects available is too limited.
- Teaching in the sixth form is inadequate. This is because not enough has been done to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to promote effective learning.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. The teaching of English and mathematics skills across subjects is too inconsistent.
- Not all students receive an appropriate level of access to impartial careers advice. Students are beginning to receive better information about the opportunities that they can access. However, this is too new a development and has not come about quickly enough for the learners currently in the sixth form.
- Leaders have only recently established a consistent system to collect, verify and analyse the progress made by students in different subjects. Consequently, leaders are unclear about which students are progressing well and who needs additional support to achieve as well as they should.
- Until September 2017, there was no appropriately designed curriculum to meet students' needs. Leaders are in the early stages of developing a more suitable programme of learning for the sixth form. For the present academic year, each student has been given end-of-year targets.
- Students studying life and living skills in 2016–17 did not have their learning accredited. Outcomes do not represent sufficient progress from students' individual



starting points. Leaders are planning for students to have their work accredited in 2017–18.

- All sixth-form students progressed to college-based learning programmes and employment or social care-funded provision at the end of Year 14 in the summer of 2017.
- Students behave well and are polite and respectful towards other people.
- The assistant headteacher with responsibility for the sixth form is recently appointed to the role. She has identified the further work required and is keen to tackle weaknesses quickly.

## School details

Unique reference number	124905
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10003736

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	Special
School category	Community special school
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	24
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Maureen Eade
Headteacher	Janet Bird
Telephone number	01502 561893
Website	<a href="http://www.warrenschoo.co.uk">www.warrenschoo.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@warrenschoo.co.uk">office@warrenschoo.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

## Information about this school

- Warren School is a special school for pupils who have severe and complex learning difficulties. A few pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties, often with attached social and emotional difficulties.
- Children join the Nursery class in the year that they turn four and the Reception class in the year that they turn five. The majority of learners stay with the school for their sixth-form education.
- The school is currently funded for 114 places. Some of the pupils are full time and

some are dual registered and spend time in their local mainstream school.

- All of the pupils have either an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and a high proportion are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The local authority issued the school with a warning notice in May 2017 due to a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.
- In July 2017, an interim executive board was put in place by the local authority. It continues to seek a suitable academy trust to sponsor the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited most classrooms to observe teaching and pupils' learning.
- They observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at play. Inspectors met formally with a group of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the interim executive board, the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. Staff were spoken to informally.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Parents were spoken to at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding pupils. They took account of school information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised other documentation.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors considered 27 responses to the online staff questionnaire, 30 responses to the online pupil questionnaire, nine free text responses, one letter from a parent sent to inspectors during the inspection and one telephone response.

## Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Copping

Ofsted Inspector

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