

New Leaf Inclusion Centre

Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall, West Midlands WS4 1NG

Inspection dates

18–19 April 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Ineffective leadership since the last inspection has resulted in a rapid decline in the quality of education provided by the school.
- Governors have failed to provide stable leadership and staffing. The school has had five headteachers in the last three years. Only three members of staff are employed on permanent contracts.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. Lessons rarely lead to sufficient learning. Pupils are not set detailed targets for improving their behaviour and learning when they start at the school. Teachers are not supported sufficiently.
- Pupils' conduct is often very poor. Pupils are not given enough support or helped to manage their own behaviour. Some parents and staff are concerned that the poor behaviour in school risks the safety of pupils and staff. Attendance and punctuality are poor.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Governors have failed to provide a safe environment for pupils. Training records and risk assessments are disorganised and incomplete.
- Pupils' outcomes are poor, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. No pupils were entered for GCSEs in 2017. No Year 6 pupils were entered for national tests in 2017. The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils.
- Accommodation is inadequate. The buildings are barely fit for purpose. The primary site is in very poor condition.
- A large number of pupils are taught in alternative provision. Many are taught there full-time, including all key stage 4 pupils. Some pupils attend full time at alternative provision that is unregistered. No checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning in the alternative provision.
- Governance is inadequate. There are vacancies on the governing body. The local authority has not provided effective support for the school. It has not ensured that pupils are cared for, or taught, sufficiently well enough. It has not held to account those who have been responsible for leading and governing the school.

The school has the following strengths

- A new interim headteacher and an interim senior secondary leader were appointed recently. They recognise that the school is inadequate. They are beginning to halt the decline in standards.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision regularly are usually more engaged than those pupils who only attend the school.
- Staff work hard in difficult circumstances.

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?

- Take urgent steps to ensure that all pupils are taught in a safe environment by:
 - ensuring that all buildings are fit for purpose, adequately cleaned and maintained
 - updating risk assessments and safeguarding training records
 - identifying and supporting the behavioural needs of each pupil
 - arranging further training for staff on managing pupil behaviour.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - resolving the inadequate governance arrangements
 - securing stability in senior leadership
 - securing permanent staffing arrangements
 - revising the curriculum at each key stage so that it meets the needs of pupils
 - making sure that the provision for disadvantaged pupils meets their needs
 - securing effective support from the local authority.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - assessing the pupils' level of attainment when they start school and matching programmes of study to the needs of each pupil
 - supplying teachers and pupils with sufficient resources
 - organising training for staff who work outside of their specialism
 - meeting the identified needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
- Tackle poor attendance and attitudes of pupils by:
 - monitoring and addressing the incidence and nature of pupils' absence more carefully
 - devising a strategy to improve pupils' attendance, which includes rewards as well as sanctions
 - making sure that pupils and staff understand what is acceptable behaviour
 - ensuring that staff act quickly, resolutely and consistently when pupils' behaviour is unacceptable
 - strengthening the system for rewarding good behaviour.

- Check the arrangements for alternative provision more carefully so the needs of pupils are met by:
 - reviewing the quality of each placement and its relevance for each pupil, including removing pupils from any provision that may be operating illegally
 - conducting regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning in these provisions
 - evaluating the impact of alternative provision in improving pupils' attendance and progress
 - supporting key stage 4 pupils in achieving recognised GCSE qualifications.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Instability in senior leadership has dogged the school in recent years. Five headteachers have led the school since the last inspection. The school has failed in its key aims of providing short-term education for pupils that helps them to improve their behaviour.
- A new interim headteacher and an interim senior secondary leader were appointed in the Spring term. Together, they have swiftly identified that the school is inadequate. They have begun to take some initial necessary steps to tackle the grave and wide-ranging weaknesses that permeate this school, including by appointing new staff.
- Governors have been ineffective in halting the school's decline since the last inspection. All but one member of the governing body has either retired or resigned. The only governor remaining is also the chair of governors. She is not able to discharge her responsibilities effectively as there are insufficient governors to form a quorum.
- Previous leaders have failed to establish high enough standards of behaviour. They have not addressed pupil misbehaviour resolutely enough and the school lacks an effective system of sanctions and rewards.
- Most of the staff are employed on fixed-term contracts. This does not provide the necessary stability for the school or its pupils. Many staff teach outside of their specialist subject area.
- Staff are not given enough regular training to enable them to manage behaviour or to fulfil their roles. The arrangements for managing the performance of staff have been haphazard. The arrival of the interim headteacher and senior secondary leader has, however, renewed optimism among many teaching and support staff.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils. Programmes of study do not reflect their prior attainment, interests or aptitudes. At key stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is not delivered in a planned or systematic way that builds on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. At key stage 3, the curriculum relies on individual teachers occupying pupils with disjointed learning activities. These often fail to engage pupils or are incorrectly matched to their needs. At key stage 4, all pupils are taught in alternative provision. This provision does not offer pupils a wide enough range of relevant courses that lead to recognised qualifications.
- The local authority has failed to intervene adequately. It has known about serious shortcomings in the school for nearly a year. While it has recently arranged a 'team around the school', it does not have the proper statutory authority to act effectively. The number of pupils admitted to the school has risen from 84 in 2015 to 142 in 2018. This expansion has not been managed effectively or with sufficient care.
- Oversight of the arrangements for alternative provision, which is used extensively by the school, including for the very youngest pupils, lies with the local authority. The local authority has not ensured that all pupils' placements are fit for purpose. Some pupils attend full time at an unregistered provider. No checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning in the alternative provision. However, many have a positive

impact on the attendance, behaviour and progress of the key stage 4 pupils who attend most regularly.

- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governance is inadequate:
 - vacancies on the governing body have left it unable to operate effectively
 - the governing body is not given sufficiently reliable information about the work of the school
 - governors have not responded adequately to the school's rapid decline or to the sharp increase in pupil numbers over the last three years
 - governors have not ensured that their statutory responsibilities are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The accommodation in the school is not fit for purpose. Facilities for pupils are poor. The primary site is dirty and badly maintained. Pupils are not always taught in a safe environment. Records of risk assessments and staff training are often incomplete or out of date.
- Pupils do not always conduct themselves safely when at the school. Until very recently, staff have been concerned for their own safety while working at the school. Some parents refuse to send their children to school because of their concerns about safety.
- Pupils' misbehaviour is not managed effectively. The new interim headteacher and senior leader have begun to support staff in establishing a safer climate for learning.
- Newly introduced 'safe and well' checks on those pupils who are absent from school, or from an alternative provider, have improved safeguarding in recent weeks.
- Pupils are given some support in identifying risks to themselves. Staff and students know who to turn to if they have any concerns about safeguarding. However, concerns are often not acted on promptly or thoroughly enough.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers work hard to try to meet the needs of pupils. However, this is made very difficult by the lack of support from senior leaders over time, inadequate training and the challenging behaviour of the pupils.
- Teachers and pupils do not always have the basic equipment, such as rulers, needed for lessons. The accommodation on the primary site is poor. Some rooms on the secondary site are very small. The art room, for example, is very modest in size but at times has catered for more than 10 pupils. Teachers have attempted to create a positive environment in classrooms and in some corridors by displaying pupils' work.
- Temporary staffing and the pupils' erratic attendance have made it very difficult for

staff to establish the positive and stable relationships that pupils need.

- Widespread inconsistency in staffing, and a lack of support from previous senior leaders, has created an overarching climate of hostility and disrespect. A small number of experienced teachers understand how to form positive relationships with pupils. They know how to take advantage of this to encourage better attitudes to learning. Individual teachers try to develop productive relationships with pupils, by establishing familiar routines, for example. Unfortunately, they are often thwarted in this by the fragile relationships that exist in the school.
- Assessment is poor. When pupils start at the school, the assessments made of their prior attainment lacks sufficient substance. Consequently, the work set by teachers is often 'hit and miss' and lacks relevance. It leads to sporadic rather than systematic learning. Most teachers provide pupils with feedback on how well they have completed a piece of work.
- Not enough is done to support pupils who have SEN and/or disability. These pupils rarely receive any support that is different from other pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils' personal development needs are not identified in detail when they arrive at the school, including what needs to be done to improve their behaviour. Pupils' records are often slow to arrive and are sometimes incomplete. Assessments of each pupils' development needs are superficial. Few strategies are identified or applied in a way that is consistent with pupils making progress in their personal development.
- The school has broadly effective relationships with outside agencies. This helps to ensure that support is provided for pupils who are potentially at risk or vulnerable. However, there is a lack of more routine access to effective support in school that helps, for example, pupils to manage their own behaviour, develop their self-esteem and improve their relationships with others.
- Many pupils are ill-prepared for the next stage of their education or employment and training. Very few pupils leave the school to return to mainstream education, or to attend a special school, other than at the end of key stage 2 or key stage 4. Year 6 pupils who leave to start at a mainstream secondary school are often unsuccessful in their secondary school career. A significant number return to the New Leaf Centre at some stage during key stage 4.
- Many key stage 4 pupils benefit from attending alternative provision and develop some useful employability skills while they are there. However, they are not given enough grounding in subjects such as English and mathematics to be sufficiently well prepared for modern life and work. Although most pupils go on to training or full-time education post-16, the school does not have an accurate view as to whether or not the destinations and courses are suitable.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality across the school is poor. Pupils attend irregularly across the key stages. There are no effective systems in place for monitoring or

improving attendance. The local authority prosecutes families, where pupils have very poor attendance, but this has not resulted in any significant improvement to their attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Previous leaders have not insisted on high enough standards of behaviour. School systems for rewarding positive behaviour, and discouraging unwanted behaviour, are ineffective.
- The school is often disorderly. Pupils on both sites have poor attitudes to learning. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, many pupils find it difficult to concentrate. They are slow to form trusting relationships with adults. In lessons, they are frequently out of their seats without permission or attempt to leave the room.
- At key stage 3, pupils' behaviour is very poor. Swearing and aggressive behaviour are commonplace. Few pupils concentrate for more than a few minutes at a time. They are easily distracted. They are frequently rude towards staff and to each other. They move around the school without regard for rules or conventions. During the inspection, pupils wandered in and out of rooms, often pushing through others, attempted to break through locked doors, and set off a fire alarm.
- Most pupils who attend alternative provision regularly behave adequately. Where liaison between the school, local authority and providers is effective it helps to develop better attitudes in these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- No key stage 4 pupils were entered for GCSE examinations in 2016 and 2017. Very few are entered for GCSE examinations in 2018.
- No key stage 2 pupils were entered for the national tests in 2017. Only a small number are entered for 2018.
- The work in key stage 3 pupils' exercise books and folders shows that they make little progress. Written work is brief or incomplete. Worksheets are used routinely across most subjects and do not form a coherent curriculum. Pupils do slightly better at key stage 1 and key stage 2 than elsewhere in the school but their progress remains inadequate.
- Pupils do not obviously benefit from attending this school. Their behaviour does not improve enough during their time at school and few return successfully to mainstream education. They are not well prepared for life after school.
- Outcomes for pupils who are disadvantaged and/or who have SEN and/or disabilities are poor. Teachers consistently fail to identify, address and meet their needs.

School details

Unique reference number	134523
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10048252

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Thompson
Interim Headteacher	Mr P Sharrock
Telephone number	01922 716900
Website	www.newleaf.walsall.sch.uk
Email address	lwatts@newleaf.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils aged between 5 and 16. All of the pupils on the school roll have encountered serious difficulties earlier in their education. Most were excluded from their previous school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils have identified SEN and/or disabilities. An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible to be supported by pupil premium funding. Most pupils are of White British origin.
- The main school buildings are on two sites. Key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils are taught in premises leased by the council from a local community association. Key stage 3 pupils are taught in mobile classrooms at the back of a local authority professional development centre. A few pupils in key stage 2 and key stage 3 are taught in alternative provision. All key stage 4 pupils are taught in alternative provision.
- There are 13 providers of alternative provision catering for around 100 pupils. These are: Walsall College, Walsall Construction, Walsall Council, Ryecroft Community Hub, Performance Through People, Peak Education, Ormiston Sheffield Community

Academy, NOVA training, JP Alternative, Elite, Electric Palace, Education Development Service, Bloomfield College.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited the primary and the secondary sites. They observed pupils in each classroom on both sites and spoke with pupils about their work and learning. They looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with senior staff and representatives from the local authority. They met with the chair of the governing body. They scrutinised a range of key documents, including information about training, safeguarding, behaviour, and the arrangements for alternative provision.
- Inspectors visited three of the alternative providers and spoke with pupils and staff in these settings. They observed lessons at all three alternative providers.
- Inspectors spoke with teaching staff. They took account of two responses to the staff survey. They took account of six responses to the pupil questionnaire. They spoke with a parent and considered other information provided to Ofsted as part of this inspection. No views were registered on Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, during this inspection.

Inspection team

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018