

The Harbour School

Station Road, Wilburton, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 3RR

Inspection dates

28–29 March 2019

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

- Leadership is weak and ineffective.
- Leaders have an inaccurate and overinflated view of the school's effectiveness and have not taken effective action to make necessary improvement. As a result, there has been a decline in the standard of provision.
- Safeguarding arrangements are ineffective. Leaders have not ensured the safety of the site. Basic procedures for assuring pupil safety and welfare are flouted on a daily basis.
- The behaviour of some pupils puts the safety of others at risk. Pupils hurt each other with little sanction or consequence.
- Governors have not challenged leaders sufficiently to improve provision. Governors resigned shortly before the inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who are absent or persistently absent from school remains too high. As a result, pupils' progress is weak.
- Pupils have poor attitudes to learning, because teaching does not meet their needs.
- Expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour are too low.
- Pupils make too little progress in improving their writing. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunity to write at length.
- The progress of pupils is weak across a range of subjects. Progress in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 is particularly weak.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need in order to be successful.
- The heads of English and mathematics do not have enough impact on improving their subjects. They have limited knowledge of provision outside their own key stage.

The school has the following strengths

- Procedures relating to those pupils on the child protection register are rigorous.
- Pupils in the nurture unit make good academic and social progress.
- Key stage 4 pupils who attend college gain suitable qualifications.
- Progress in mathematics is improving.

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?

- Ensure the safety of pupils by making sure that:
 - action is taken to ensure that pupils are safe on the school site
 - all staff follow the school's policy and procedures when taking pupils out on trips and visits, and that visits are adequately staffed
 - risk assessments are detailed, specific to the event and cover the potential risks to pupils and staff
 - urgent action is taken to ensure that pupils' liberty is not restricted in the school.
- Urgently and rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders take swift action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - the school's curriculum meets pupils' academic and personal development needs
 - English and mathematics leaders are effective in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all key stages
 - leaders' evaluations of all aspects of the school's work are accurate, sharply focused and used to inform the school's improvement planning
 - there are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan work that addresses the learning needs of pupils and enables them to deepen their knowledge and understanding
 - teachers provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their writing.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - ensuring that staff follow the school's behaviour policy
 - ensuring that pupils' behaviour does not put the safety of others at risk.
- Improve school attendance and reduce persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders have failed to make essential improvements since the previous inspection and have not demonstrated the capacity to provide an acceptable standard of education. The improvements seen during the monitoring visit in 2017 have not been sustained.
- Leaders and managers have not secured adequate teaching and learning. There are weaknesses across the key stages and subjects. As a result, outcomes for pupils are weak.
- Senior leaders have not established acceptable behaviour. A third of staff who expressed a view felt senior staff did not support them when dealing with pupils' misbehaviour.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with the academic knowledge and skills they need to be successful. The timetable covers a broad range of subjects, but too often there is not enough emphasis on securing and deepening pupils' understanding. Delivery of the curriculum in some subjects fails to challenge and motivate pupils.
- The frequent trips and visits do not build on pupils' learning in the classroom. Therefore, they have limited impact on pupils' progress.
- Senior staff have an overgenerous view of the school's performance. They judge all standards in the school to be good, without considering the impact of their work.
- Heads of mathematics and English are committed to improving outcomes for pupils in their subjects. However, their impact is too limited.
- Pupils in key stage 4 follow a curriculum that is closely linked to their interests and ability. Most pupils attend vocational courses at the local college. The most able pupils are studying for GCSEs in mathematics and English.
- As a result of an external review of the use of pupil premium funding, leaders are now more effective in monitoring the impact of spending. Personalised action plans are reviewed throughout the year to ensure that strategies have a positive impact on supporting pupils. The funding is being used effectively to improve the attendance, behaviour and progress of disadvantaged pupils. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is weaker than that of their peers.
- The local authority is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are closely monitoring provision and are providing the school with support to improve teaching, learning and leadership.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance

- Governors recently reviewed their effectiveness and decided the school would benefit from a new governing body. As a result, all of the governors have resigned. The local authority has taken swift action to put in place an interim executive board to take on the role of school governance.

- Governors have not been rigorous in ensuring that the necessary actions are followed through by leaders in order to improve aspects of the school's work.
- Records of governors' meetings indicate that governors have been asking leaders challenging questions about the use of restraint. As a result, there has been a decline in the number of pupil restraints. However, the number of behaviour incidents remains high.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Impromptu visits off site are not planned carefully enough. Risk assessments are generic and do not take into account the possible dangers to pupils or staff. As a result, pupils and staff are vulnerable and at risk. This is particularly the case when individual staff members take pupils off site in their cars. These visits are often decided on the day and are recorded in the out-of-school log. This log lacks the detail required to ensure that leaders know where pupils are and the purpose of the trip.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school premises are safe. For example, there is an uncovered pond that is easily accessed by pupils. Leaders are aware of the potential risk it presents but have not taken appropriate action to make the area safe. Pupils are also able to leave the school site, because it is not secure.
- Many classroom doors are locked as a behaviour management strategy. This restricts pupils' liberty.
- Leaders have ensured that all the pre-employment checks are carried out on staff to ensure that they are fit to work with pupils.
- Staff are quick to report any child protection concerns they may have about the well-being of pupils. These referrals are followed up swiftly by the designated safeguarding leader and her team. The school tenaciously follows up child protection referrals with the appropriate agencies. Pupil records are detailed and indicate a close working relationship between the school and outside agencies.
- Thorough and systematic routines are in place to follow up reasons for pupils' absence.
- The work of the education social worker makes a valuable contribution to the safety and well-being of vulnerable pupils. His professional knowledge enables him to provide effective contact between school, home and external agencies. His support continues during school holidays, as he maintains contact with families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching of reading and writing is weak, particularly in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. Phonics is not taught well enough, because teachers' subject knowledge is weak. Phonic knowledge is not taught systematically. The purpose of some activities is unclear, such as pupils copying teachers' hand writing before they are able to form letters correctly.

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Inspectors saw pupils refusing to work, but this appeared to be accepted by staff as these pupils were neither encouraged nor challenged to work. Pupils are not encouraged to add the necessary detail to their work. Teachers are prepared to accept pupils making the minimum effort.
- Too often, teachers do not match the work to the needs or interests of pupils. Work lacks challenge, as teaching focuses on task completion rather than requiring pupils to think hard in order to develop their understanding. This leads to pupils being apathetic about their learning. As a result, they make little effort with their work, leading to weak progress, especially for the most able pupils.
- Teachers provide limited opportunity for pupils to give detailed answers or to write at length. As a result, pupils do not develop their stamina to write or improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- As an incentive, pupils are allowed to choose a reward activity once they have completed their work. However, in most classes, pupils spend more time on reward activities than actually working. This is particularly evident in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. As a result, too much learning time is lost. This limits pupils' progress and fails to develop their resilience as learners.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils complete the work they have missed through absence or refusal to work. As a result, pupils' progress is hindered, because the gaps in their knowledge make it difficult to move on to the next steps in learning. Teachers' assessment is often too generous. It is often based on the effort pupils have made rather than whether they have met the assessment criteria.
- Stronger progress was seen in subjects where pupils have a good understanding of the teachers' expectations. When teachers set interesting and varied activities that are matched to the needs of the pupils, pupils are motivated in their learning and were happy to talk to inspectors about their learning.
- Relationships between pupils and permanent members of staff are positive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Just over a third of staff who expressed an opinion do not feel pupils are safe. Pupils are potentially at risk, because leaders have not ensured that staff follow agreed policies and procedures. Potential hazards are not carefully risk assessed or made safe.
- Due to the lack of permanent support staff, the school currently employs a high number of temporary staff. Some of them are not trained or qualified to meet the needs of the pupils with whom they work. This places the welfare of the pupils potentially at risk.
- Most pupils who expressed a view said they feel safe in the school. However, they do not always recognise the behaviour of some pupils as being unsafe, for example when

pupils cause injury to others due to their behaviour. Pupils are too accepting that this happens.

- Pupils report that incidents of bullying occur in the school. Although pupils say staff listen to their concerns, around a quarter of pupils who completed the pupil questionnaire did not feel bullying was dealt with effectively.
- Records indicate that there have been a small number of racist incidents since the previous inspection. These are all followed up by staff. However, the actions taken do not always ensure that pupils understand the seriousness of their behaviour.
- Pupils in the nurture class are supported well to gain confidence and develop their social skills. Positive relationships between the staff and pupils make them feel secure. Pupils are involved in setting their weekly personal development targets, enabling them to take ownership of their learning.
- Careers education, advice and guidance are developing. Leaders have recently worked with outside consultants to develop a coherent careers programme from Year 8. Pupils receive advice from an independent careers adviser.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and culture development, along with their understanding of fundamental British values, is catered for through the personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils learn about a variety of cultures and religions and about keeping healthy. Pupils say the school encourages them to look after their physical and mental health.
- Year 10 and 11 pupils who attend college receive effective support. A well-planned induction programme, support in college and individualised advice on post-16 options ensure that these pupils are successful. As a result, pupils move on to further education at the end of Year 11. Most complete their post-16 course.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Parents, carers and staff express concerns about pupils' behaviour.
- Despite actions taken by leaders, attendance remains well below average. The number of pupils persistently absent is still well above average. Poor attendance has a negative effect on pupils' progress.
- The number of pupils who have received fixed-term exclusions has reduced since the previous inspection. However, the overall proportion of exclusions remains too high.
- The expectations of staff about pupils' behaviour are not high enough. There is a lack of consistency in managing pupils' behaviour. Inspectors saw examples of staff ignoring pupils swearing or demonstrating unacceptable behaviour. Not all staff follow the school's behaviour policy.
- Pupils say that behaviour around the school varies and staff do not all follow up unacceptable behaviour consistently. One pupil commented that staff: 'don't tell us what we shouldn't do. They talk about consequences but sometimes we need to be told that what we are doing is wrong.'
- Some pupils do not participate in lessons. They refuse to work, and this is not always challenged by staff. Inspectors saw evidence of this in both key stage 1 and key stage

4. Behaviour in the dining room and in the playground is acceptable because there are high levels of supervision. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to choose where they eat their lunch and who with. Pupils using the play equipment work cooperatively together. Staff reinforce social expectations.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Most pupils enter the school with gaps in their learning. The school's priority when pupils arrive is to re-engage them in their learning. However, this process is too slow and, as a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not ensuring that pupils make sufficient progress from their starting points. The use of old national curriculum levels to measure progress is not providing accurate achievement information.
- The curriculum is not interesting or motivating in many subjects. It does not allow pupils progressively to gain knowledge and skills in all subjects. Therefore, learning is superficial, leading to weak outcomes.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 are weak. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Work lacks challenge, and the pace of learning is too slow. As a result, pupils make little progress over time. For example, many pupils are still unable to form letters correctly or write in sentences.
- Pupils who follow the extended curriculum are frequently taken out of school on visits. The aim is for pupils to learn outside the classroom on trips that are linked to curriculum topics. However, evidence shows that these pupils make slower progress than others.
- Pupils who are frequently absent from school make limited progress. There are gaps in their knowledge, due to the large amount of work they miss. They are not expected to catch up the missing work.
- Science books indicate that not all groups of pupils are set work that allows them to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to think for themselves in order to develop scientific enquiry skills.
- The work in books of pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 shows indications of improved progress. In English, pupils are starting to write at length for a variety of reasons. In mathematics, pupils use a range of calculation methods to solve number and word problems.
- Pupils make stronger progress in practical subjects, particularly design and technology. This is because pupils enjoy their work, are provided with clear guidance and given a degree of independence. Inspectors saw pupils using equipment safely, with minimum supervision, producing some quality products.
- Pupils who attend college achieve well on their vocational and GCSE programmes. In 2018, all pupils who left Year 11 attained qualifications that enabled them to progress to further education courses.

School details

Unique reference number	134193
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10088669

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Underwood
Headteacher	Debra Smith
Telephone number	01353 740 229
Website	www.theharbourschool.co.uk
Email address	office@harbour.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 December 2016

Information about this school

- The Harbour is a special school for boys with social, emotional and mental health needs. A small number have autistic spectrum disorder. Many pupils join the school at different stages in their school career, having had a disrupted education in their previous school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- Pupils attend from all over Cambridgeshire and sometimes from outside the county.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average.
- A small number of pupils in key stage 4 are educated off site at Cambridge Regional College. Two pupils are currently completing an online learning programme through Academy 21.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons across subjects and across all year groups. They were accompanied by members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, head of key stage 4 and the heads of mathematics and English. The lead inspector met with the outgoing chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke to officers from the local authority and were made aware of the warning notice issued to the school.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with a group of pupils from Year 6 and informally with a number of pupils from different year groups at break and lunchtime. They also observed behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its performance, the school's development plan, school policies and procedures and pupils' progress information.
- A range of documentation relating to safeguarding was scrutinised, including behaviour and attendance records, risk assessments and information on racist incidents.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 31 staff and 17 pupils to the Ofsted inspection questionnaire. There were too few parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View for analysis. The lead inspector did take into account the four free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Caroline Parry, lead inspector

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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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