

Inspection of Hendon Brook School

Hendon Brook, Townhouse Road, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 8BP

Inspection dates: 26–27 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are not getting a good deal at this school. There has been no permanent headteacher in post since October 2018. Consequently, pupils have experienced a number of different leaders and staff.

The local authority has recently consulted with parents and carers and other stakeholders on the future of the school. As yet, no decision has been made. This uncertainty, combined with insecure leadership and staffing, has severely disrupted the quality of education provided at Hendon Brook. The low expectations of leaders and teachers have not helped pupils to achieve well. As a result, the school remains inadequate. Too little progress has been made since the previous inspection, when the school was judged inadequate.

The new, temporary leaders have created a calm, settled and positive environment for the pupils. Pupils feel well supported by the adults who work with them. We observed warm and respectful relationships between pupils and staff throughout the school.

Pupils enjoy attending and feel safe in school. They told us that there used to be bullying but not anymore. They believe that staff sort out any worries about bullying. Pupils behave well, get on well together and help each other.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils do not get a good start to their education at this school. The succession of temporary senior leaders has made too little difference to the quality of education that pupils experience. Most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have not been met. There is no permanent headteacher in post and the school is heavily reliant on external support which could be withdrawn at any time. In addition, the future of the school is uncertain. As a result, the capacity for the school to improve is poor.

Since the last inspection, governors have faced many challenges which have had a negative impact on their ability to hold senior leaders to account. For example, they were not aware that all pupils are moving to new schools in January 2020. Consequently, governors are unclear about some of their statutory roles and responsibilities.

The current temporary leaders have been supporting the school since April 2019. They have wasted no time in working with parents, and the local authority, to identify appropriate permanent school places for all pupils currently at the school. They are working closely with staff in the new schools to make sure every pupil has a planned and supported move into their new placements. Leaders have ensured that pupils attend a calm and safe environment.

Curriculum planning is weak and lacks ambition. In English and mathematics,

teachers have clear plans and know what they want pupils to know and be able to do by the end of the academic year. However, this is not in place for the other subjects, such as science, history and religious education. The result is that pupils are experiencing a series of poorly planned lessons with no long-term aims. Teachers do not understand what pupils should know and be able to do in line with the national curriculum requirements.

The activities that teachers plan to deliver the curriculum do not help pupils to learn successfully. Teachers have not put enough thought into how pupils can practise and deepen their learning. They do not make effective use of assessment to make sure that pupils can build on prior learning. Consequently, pupils are not building secure knowledge and skills across a range of subjects.

Reading is a high priority in school. Pupils enjoy their books and are confident readers. They enjoy reading to adults who encourage them to talk about the story and the characters. All staff have had training to enable them to teach phonics. They develop pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters represent through a range of meaningful activities tailored to meet the specific needs of each pupil. This helps pupils to read with increasing accuracy.

Staff provide pupils with an adequate range of activities to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils participate in science days and opportunities to visit places of worship, for example a local mosque. Pupils recently completed a project on Remembrance Day. Teachers explained that they plan these extra activities as they go along. However, these activities do not always have a big impact on pupils' learning or their preparation for life in modern Britain. This is because they sometimes lack purpose. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that opportunities to promote pupils' personal development are carefully considered as part of the school's curriculum plan.

The calm, friendly and respectful atmosphere in the school helps pupils to settle quickly in lessons. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Staff are quick to identify if a pupil may need some additional support. Behaviour in and around the school has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils commented positively to us about the new systems that have been put in place to manage behaviour. They also learn strategies that they can use to manage their own behaviour and emotions within school.

Pupils enjoy their outdoor learning. They build fires, cook food and make shelters. They learn to work together, take risks and try different activities. Pupils also enjoy their physical education classes and learn to work as a team. They also learn that sometimes you lose and that is okay.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The high staff-to-pupil ratio works to keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant and quick to

respond to any behaviour that may indicate a cause for concern. Leaders respond quickly and contact external agencies for support where it may be needed.

Pupils told inspectors that they have adults they can go to if they feel worried or upset. They told us that adults listen to them and help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At the time of this inspection, it was unclear whether the school will remain open or close. This has hampered improvement since the previous inspection. Should the school remain open, leadership capacity needs to be strengthened so that the school becomes less reliant on external support.
- Subject leaders do not have well-thought-out curriculum plans for subjects other than English and mathematics. Curriculum plans for science and the foundation subjects lack detail. They do not set out the knowledge and skills that pupils should be acquiring in each year group as they move through the school. This has resulted in subjects being delivered in a shallow or 'ad-hoc' way. Subject leaders need to ensure that all subjects are carefully planned, with clearly defined end points that at least match the statutory requirements of the national curriculum.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to plan pupils' next steps in learning is weak. As a result, pupils are not able to build on their prior learning. In turn, this leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge across a range of subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers use the information they have about what pupils know and can do when planning activities to deliver the curriculum.
- Leaders have not made sure that there is a well-planned curriculum to support pupils' personal development. This has resulted in shallow opportunities to develop pupils' SMSC development and their understanding of British values. Leaders must make sure that provision for pupils' development is carefully woven into the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	119110
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10110874
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Christine Howarth
Headteacher	Siobhan Halligan (Acting)
Website	www.hendonbrook.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 April 2017

Information about this school

- A consultation on the future of Hendon Brook School closed on 18 October 2019. A decision had not been made at the time of the inspection. The current headteacher has been seconded through the local authority to support the school. She is the fourth leader since the school was placed in special measures in 2017.
- The school provides education for primary-aged pupils out of mainstream school due to behavioural, social, emotional or mental health reasons.
- All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan or are in the process of receiving one.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

- We held discussions with the headteacher, teachers, other members of staff and members of the governing body. These discussions considered the quality of education, the wider experiences of pupils at the school, aspects of pupils' behaviour, and leadership and management. An inspector spoke with one parent by telephone.
- In considering the quality of education, we concentrated on reading, English, mathematics and history in depth. We discussed the arrangements for the curriculum and teaching with the headteacher and teachers. We visited lessons and then talked with pupils about what they had been learning. We looked at pupils' exercise books in these subjects.
- We spoke to staff, governors and pupils about how the school keeps pupils safe. We examined the single central record of the checks undertaken to make sure that staff are suitable to work in school. We reviewed the school's safeguarding policy.
- We also spoke to pupils and staff about the wider curriculum, including the school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Inspection team

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