

# Inspection of Werneth School

Harrytown, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 3BX

---

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

---

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Andrew Conroy. This school is part of the Education Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Michelle Murray, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen White.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The overall systems to safeguard pupils are effective. Most pupils agree that they feel safe at school. Pupils typically said that there are adults in school whom they would speak to if they had any concerns about bullying or unkind name calling. However, some pupils were not confident that staff would take any action to improve matters.

Pupils' learning experiences vary from lesson to lesson. Some pupils regularly have their learning disrupted by the poor behaviour of others. Learning is also interrupted by those pupils who choose to truant lessons, wander the corridors or arrive late to lessons. This behaviour makes others feel unsettled. It stops pupils from learning all that they should. Some staff, including leaders, do not challenge pupils' poor behaviour.

Absence levels are very high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This prevents some of these pupils from building their subject knowledge over time.

The school has raised its expectations of what pupils can achieve. Most pupils are beginning to benefit from a broader curriculum. However, there are some weaknesses in the design and delivery of some subject curriculums. This hinders some pupils from achieving as well as they should.

Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a range of sports activities. They benefit from subject-specific trips to museums and competitions.

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

The school, together with the local governing body and the trust, has not demonstrated the capacity to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance in a sustainable way. Many pupils, parents, carers and staff are concerned about pupils' behaviour at the school.

The school has revised the behaviour management systems and policies. This has led to some improvement in pupils' behaviour in some lessons. However, some pupils continue to have their learning disrupted by the poor behaviour of others.

During breaktimes and between lessons, some pupils do not regulate their behaviour. Often, they show a lack of respect for their peers and staff. For example, some pupils use rude and offensive language to others. Poor behaviour is not dealt with well enough. The school has not ensured that there is a consistent and successful approach to promoting positive behaviour. This means that unacceptable behaviour continues to hinder the enjoyment and achievement of other pupils at school.

Absences from school, including persistent absence, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, are high. They show little sign of improvement. This means that these pupils miss out on key aspects of their education. The gaps in their learning widen over time. The school, with the support of the trust, has recently revised the systems to monitor pupils' attendance. It has also begun to work more closely with pupils and their families. However, there is limited demonstrable impact of these new approaches.

The school has improved some aspects of the quality of education that pupils receive. For example, current pupils in key stage 4 study a wider range of subjects, including vocational subjects, than they have done in the past. More pupils are studying a language at GCSE. Consequently, an increasing proportion of pupils are studying the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate.

In the past, many subject curriculums, especially at key stage 3, were not designed sufficiently well. The trust has supported the school to improve its curriculum design. In some subjects, the school has identified what pupils need to know and when this content should be taught. In these subjects, teachers typically provide opportunities for pupils to revisit learning, so that their knowledge is increasingly secure. However, some other subjects are at an earlier stage of development. In these subjects, there is a lack of clarity about what pupils should know and remember. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Some teachers successfully use assessment strategies to check how well pupils have understood what has been taught. However, in some other subjects, teachers are not alert to pupils' misconceptions. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

The school has raised the profile of reading. In many subjects, there is an increasing focus on developing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. Younger pupils have opportunities to read for pleasure. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 receive appropriate support if they find reading difficult. However, this is not the case for older pupils. Some older pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge are not helped to catch up. This hinders how well these pupils can access the curriculum. It hampers their overall achievement.

The school has improved its strategies to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Some teachers use the information that they receive about pupils' needs effectively. They adapt the delivery of the curriculum, so that those pupils with SEND, especially those who attend school more regularly, learn well. However, this is not the case everywhere. As a result, the achievement of pupils with SEND is variable.

Pupils appreciate the support that they receive from 'The Hart Centre' for their mental health and emotional well-being. The school is working to increase the range of extra-curricular activities to broaden pupils' experiences, talents and interests. Pupils receive age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education. However, some aspects of the school's work to support pupils' personal development are not designed and delivered consistently well. For example, some older pupils are

removed from 'life learning' lessons, religious education or physical education to receive extra support for other subjects. This means that they miss out on important information. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures. However, some pupils do not show respect for the differences between themselves and others. As a result, they are not prepared sufficiently well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils receive helpful careers advice. The school organises careers fairs for pupils, which include representatives from apprenticeship providers. These activities support pupils to make decisions about their next steps. However, older pupils do not have the opportunity to experience work placements. This limits some pupils' understanding of the world of work.

Most staff are committed to working at the school. Despite the concerns of some staff around pupils' behaviour, staff appreciate leaders' efforts to improve their well-being. The school considers staff's workload when making decisions about the curriculum.

The school seeks to engage with parents and the wider community. For example, the school provides parents with helpful information on the curriculum. This helps them to support their children as they move into Year 7.

The trust and the local governing body are supportive of the school. For example, they have secured the services of an external consultant. This is helping trustees and governors to gain a greater overview of the curriculum that is on offer. However, the trust and the local governing body do not provide sufficient or effective challenge to the school to ensure that there is a positive environment where all pupils can thrive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school, together with the local governing body and the trust, has not taken effective or timely enough action to tackle the poor behaviour and attendance rates of some pupils in the school. As a result, absence rates are high and learning is disrupted. The school must ensure that it devises and implements an effective approach to promoting positive behaviour that is followed consistently well by all staff.
- A significant minority of pupils do not behave well around the school building. In addition, some pupils do not behave well in classrooms. Some pupils show a lack of respect for their peers and staff. Poor behaviour is not tackled well enough, especially around the school. This spoils pupils' enjoyment of school and hinders

their learning. The school must ensure that staff are well equipped and well supported to challenge the poor behaviour of pupils.

- Too many pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, are absent from school. This means that they miss out on valuable learning time and the gaps in their knowledge widen. The school should build on recent strategies to ensure that pupils attend regularly.
- Some subject curriculums are at an early stage of development. In these subjects, the key knowledge that pupils should learn has not been identified. This means that teachers do not have the information that they need to ensure that pupils know and remember more. This leads to unevenness in pupils' achievement across subjects. The school should ensure that it finalises its curriculum thinking, so that pupils build a secure body of subject knowledge over time.
- Some pupils with SEND do not receive the support that they need to access the curriculum. This hinders their achievement. The school should make sure that teachers are well equipped to adapt the delivery of the curriculum, so that pupils with SEND learn all that they should.
- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively enough to check pupils' learning. This means that some pupils have gaps in their learning that go unaddressed. This hampers pupils' achievement. The school should ensure that assessment strategies are used effectively to spot, and then address, gaps in pupils' learning.
- Some older pupils do not receive appropriate support to help them overcome gaps in their reading knowledge. This hinders these pupils from accessing the curriculum. It hampers their overall achievement. The school should ensure that older pupils, who find reading difficult, receive the support that they need to catch up quickly.
- Some aspects of the school's work to support pupils' personal development are not designed or implemented consistently well. This means that some pupils do not gain all of the knowledge that they need in readiness for life in modern Britain. The school should ensure that the programmes to support pupils' personal development are coherently designed and implemented, so that pupils are better prepared for their future lives.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148327
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290383
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1080
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Helen White
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Michelle Murray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Conroy
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wernethschool.com">www.wernethschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy school in January 2021. When its predecessor school, Werneth School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate and required special measures.
- The school joined the Education Learning Trust in January 2021.
- There have been some changes to the staffing of the school since it joined the multi-academy trust. This includes the appointment of a deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher.
- The school makes use of four registered and two unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the CEO of the trust, members of the trust board and representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of trustees and the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the alternative providers who work with the school. An inspector spoke with a consultant employed by the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, mathematics, music, science and physical education. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also met with subject leaders to review other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector



Tuesday Humby

Ofsted Inspector

Tim Long

Ofsted Inspector

Steven Caldecott

Ofsted Inspector

Paula Crawley

Ofsted Inspector

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023