

Grange School

Matthews Lane, Gorton, Manchester M12 4GR

Inspection dates

28–29 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders' and managers' weak leadership has contributed to the sharp decline in standards of education since the last inspection.
- Leaders have an overly generalised and optimistic view of how well they and the school are doing.
- Planning for school improvement is not sharp enough. Plans do not aim to address areas of glaring weakness and do not contain measurable targets.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching are overgenerous and this has prevented them from taking decisive action to stem the decline in standards of teaching.
- The quality of teaching is too inconsistent across the school. Teachers do not plan effectively to meet pupils' diverse needs. As such, pupils find the work too easy or too hard and they do not make the progress that they should.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teachers do not challenge the most able pupils enough.
- Teachers do not carefully assess what pupils can and cannot do.
- The teaching of reading and writing is not prioritised and pupils make weak progress in these areas.
- Teaching assistants do not help pupils to make consistent progress in their learning.
- The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is weak. Leaders are unclear how much progress pupils have made over time and they do not track the progress of key groups such as disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders do not have appropriate plans in place for spending the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium and the physical education (PE) and sport premium.
- Leaders' plans for a new curriculum lack detail and do not demonstrate that a broad and balanced curriculum is in place.
- Governors do not have the skills and understanding to hold leaders to account. They have not challenged leaders effectively during a period of declining standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding and they work effectively with parents to ensure that pupils are safe and well looked after.
- The school's work to support the behaviour of pupils is good.
- Systems for developing pupils' personal development and welfare are effective.

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 teaching so that pupils' progress is accelerated, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide pupils of different abilities with work that challenges them to make rapid progress from their different starting points
 - teachers carefully assess what pupils can do and use this information to inform future teaching
 - the most able pupils are challenged to make consistently strong progress
 - teaching assistants focus their efforts on supporting pupils to make consistent gains in their learning
 - the teaching of reading and writing across the school is strengthened.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders develop their monitoring and evaluation of the school's work to gain a deeper and more accurate view of the school's effectiveness
 - plans to improve the school are broad and ambitious and contain specific and measurable targets
 - evaluations of the quality of teaching are more accurate
 - the tracking of pupils' progress is improved, including careful tracking of groups such as disadvantaged pupils
 - leaders have appropriate plans in place for spending the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium and the PE and sport premium
 - plans for the new curriculum are more detailed to make sure that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
 - governors have the skills and understanding needed to fulfil all of their statutory duties and to hold leaders to account for the quality of education being provided.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- The effectiveness of teaching has declined rapidly and senior leaders have failed to take effective action to address this deterioration. The school's unique ambition 'to provide the autism community of Manchester and beyond with an outstanding education service' is not realised because too many pupils fail to reach their potential as a result of weak teaching.
- Leaders' evaluations of teaching are overgenerous. Leaders' expectations for the quality of teaching are too low. As a result, they have been oblivious to the decline in standards of teaching since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have extended the range of training opportunities for teachers. For example, teachers have observed teaching in mainstream primary schools. However, this work has not prevented the emergence of pronounced inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Systems for tracking the progress made by pupils are not fit for purpose. Leaders are unable to evaluate how much progress pupils have made over time. They do not track the progress of key groups of pupils, such as those pupils who are disadvantaged. Consequently, leaders have no understanding of how well these groups are learning.
- Leaders do not have a deep and comprehensive understanding of the school's effectiveness. They are unaware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has prevented leaders from taking appropriate actions to secure improvements where the need has been greatest.
- The school's improvement plan is too narrow and it does not aim to tackle areas of obvious weakness. Plans do not contain specific and measurable targets. As a result, leaders and governors are unable to evaluate how much progress is being made towards the fulfilment of these plans.
- There is no effective oversight of different areas of the school's work. It is unclear who has overall responsibility for the quality of teaching, the design and implementation of the curriculum and pupils' achievement. Consequently, there is a lack of accountability in these important areas.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium is weak. Leaders have not identified the potential barriers to achievement typically faced by disadvantaged pupils at the school. Consequently, they have not ensured that pupil premium funding is used to address these potential barriers. Although leaders have evaluated the effectiveness of different pupil premium strategies clearly, they are unaware what impact the pupil premium is having on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils as a group.
- The school's special educational needs (SEN) funding is allocated appropriately. Despite this, its impact on the rate of academic progress made by pupils is undermined by weak teaching.
- Leaders currently have no plans in place for the spending of the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium or the PE and sport premium.
- Leaders have recently started to overhaul the curriculum. They have introduced a

'pathways' model where pupils are placed in classes according to their needs rather than on the basis of age. Leaders' plans for this new curriculum lack the detail necessary to confirm that pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum.

- Leaders have extended the range of courses that pupils study in key stage 4. For example, pupils now study catering and horticulture. Despite this, pupils do not have a choice in what courses they study. Furthermore, the school does not currently teach any level 2 qualifications. As a result, the most able pupils are not able to study courses that would enable them to fulfil their potential.
- The formal curriculum is well supported by opportunities for enrichment. Pupils benefit from extensive opportunities to develop skills associated with independent living. There are also many opportunities for pupils to be active and healthy. For example, pupils regularly go swimming and older pupils are encouraged to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- The school's work to develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is strong. Staff ensure that pupils' social development is given a high priority. Many pupils undertake regular visits to shops to enhance their ability to engage with others in a functional and friendly manner. Pupils also benefit from innovative strategies to develop their cultural awareness. For example, pupils are currently undertaking a project with Manchester Museum to make the museum more autism-friendly.
- It is strongly recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- The actions of governors have not prevented the failure to provide an acceptable standard of education. Governors have been too accepting of leaders' overgenerous judgements of the school's effectiveness. They have been too reliant on information provided by leaders and they have not held leaders to account for the school's work.
- The governing body has been over-reliant on a small number of committed governors. These governors, although passionate about the school's work, do not have the skills and experience to challenge leaders with conviction. Some governors ask appropriate questions to challenge leaders, but they have not been tenacious enough in following up when improvements have not materialised.
- Governors have failed to fulfil all of their statutory duties. There are significant gaps in the information published on the school's website, and plans and checks on the spending of some external funding are inadequate.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because leaders attach a high priority to the school's work in this area. They have implemented broad and robust measures to ensure that pupils feel safe and are equipped with the knowledge and understanding to make sensible decisions about their own safety away from school.
- The designated safeguarding lead manages a core safeguarding team effectively. His team has ensured that staff at the school share a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the safeguarding risks that are more prevalent among members of

the autism community. They liaise effectively with parents to share information and to enlist their support in keeping children safe outside of school hours.

- Leaders use external audits to help them to understand the strengths and relative weaknesses of their safeguarding practice. After a recent review of safeguarding, for example, leaders extended the scope of their work around e-safety.
- Staff receive effective training on different aspects of safeguarding. They understand the school's safeguarding procedures. They know the pupils exceptionally well and they are extremely vigilant to any changes in their mood or presentation.
- Leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils are well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not plan effectively to meet the diverse needs of pupils. Pupils find much of the work too easy or too difficult. As a result, pupils make inadequate progress.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are fundamentally too low. They do not provide pupils with interesting and demanding work that challenges them to make strong progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve are particularly low. The work that is provided for these pupils often fails to capture their interest because they find it too easy.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not assess what pupils can do effectively. There is little ongoing assessment of what pupils can and cannot do. As a result, teachers are not utilising precise information about pupils' prior attainment when they plan future learning.
- Teaching assistants are not deployed effectively in lessons. Their work is focused on securing compliant behaviour rather than facilitating progress in learning.
- The teaching of reading and writing is particularly weak across the school. Pupils are not encouraged to read widely and often. Pupils read books that are poorly matched to their interests and abilities. Teachers do not use questioning to help pupils develop higher-order reading skills, such as the ability to make inferences from text.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are too low and not enough attention is given to helping pupils to develop the quality and accuracy of their written work.
- There are pockets of more effective teaching where pupils are motivated because work is better matched to their needs and abilities. Teaching on the 'first steps' pathway (key stage 1) is a strength because systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are effective. On this pathway, teachers and teaching assistants use resources imaginatively to capture pupils' interest. They provide pupils with a broad and challenging range of activities that help them to make good progress in different areas.
- Teachers and other adults consistently manage pupils' behaviour well. They build strong relationships with pupils and utilise a range of strategies to refocus pupils on their work. Too often, however, weak teaching fails to capitalise on the excellent work that is undertaken to get pupils ready to learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel extremely safe in school. They say that bullying is rare and they are fully confident that, should it happen, members of staff would deal with it effectively. Pupils say that they would be happy telling any adult at the school if they were upset or had a problem.
- The school's work to support pupils to maintain their physical health is effective. Pupils regularly take part in catering lessons, where they learn important lessons about safety, hygiene and what constitutes a healthy diet. Staff enthusiastically promote the benefits of regular exercise and the curriculum is infused with rich opportunities for pupils to exercise in different ways. For example, great importance is attached to regular swimming sessions and many pupils enjoy taking advantage of the indoor and outdoor gym equipment that is provided for their use.
- Teachers and other adults build open and positive relationships with pupils, which have an extremely positive influence on pupils' emotional health and well-being. Where pupils experience issues with their mental health, the school works very well with external agencies, such as the child and adolescent mental health service, to ensure that pupils receive timely and effective support.
- Older pupils receive good careers advice which helps to ensure that the transition to the next stage of their education or training is as smooth as possible.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Members of staff have created an extremely calm and supportive environment that very effectively helps pupils to behave in a sensible and mature manner.
- An increasing number of pupils who join the school have struggled to regulate their behaviour in other settings. Members of staff adopt highly nurturing strategies to secure significant and sustained improvements in the behaviour of these pupils.
- Teachers and other adults are highly skilled at de-escalating poor behaviour in lessons. They use their understanding of pupils' needs to intervene when behaviour becomes challenging. For example, teachers and other adults engage pupils in physical activities such as playing on trampolines or exercising on gym equipment to re-establish the right frame of mind to learn. These strategies help ensure that poor behaviour is rarely a barrier to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school site is calm and purposeful. Pupils treat each other with respect and they are very friendly towards members of staff and visitors. Pupils are polite, inquisitive and keen to get to know others.
- Pupils have largely positive attitudes to learning. They do their best and typically try hard, even when teaching is not matched to their needs. However, there are occasions when pupils are not engaged by their learning, and this sometimes leads to pupils

drifting off-task.

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has declined. This is because leaders have implemented a broad range of strategies to improve the attendance of pupils who have suffered from regular absence in the past. The school's family liaison officer prioritises attendance in her work with parents and leaders' systems for tracking absence are thorough and precise.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching over time and of pupils' work confirms that, across most year groups, current pupils are not making sufficient progress. In particular, teachers' poor planning and low expectations frequently limit pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not carefully track the amount of progress made by pupils. Leaders have used a number of different systems to measure the amount of progress made by pupils in recent years. However, due to the lack of comparability between these different systems, leaders are unaware of how much progress pupils have made over time.
- Leaders do not track the progress made by groups of pupils such as disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, they do not know how much progress these groups are making. Moreover, they cannot demonstrate what impact the pupil premium is having on rates of achievement among disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' expectations of what constitutes good progress are too low, particularly for the most able. Even by leaders' own definition of what constitutes good progress, many pupils made inadequate progress during the last academic year, particularly in key stage 2 and key stage 3.
- Leaders' records indicate that pupils make weaker progress in reading and writing compared to mathematics. Leaders do not track pupils' progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Pupils in Year 11 gain accreditation in a range of entry-level qualifications such as English, mathematics, science and personal and social education. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to study level 2 qualifications if they demonstrate the interest and ability to do so. Consequently, the most able pupils do not achieve a suite of qualifications that are appropriate for their ability and prior attainment.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- This is a small sixth form. The majority of pupils transfer to mainstream colleges at the end of Year 11. Those students who remain at the school for their post-16 education typically lack the independence to access a mainstream setting.
- The sixth form requires improvement because leaders cannot yet demonstrate that the new sixth-form curriculum is leading to good outcomes. Leaders overhauled the sixth-form curriculum because it was failing to engage students. In turn, this was leading to weak outcomes for students. Although there are signs that students are beginning to make faster progress on this new curriculum, it is too early to conclude that outcomes are now good.

- Leaders identified that provision in the sixth form was not fit for purpose. They have a sound rationale for the changes they are implementing and evidence from students' work and observations of teaching indicate that pupils are starting to make better progress. As yet, leaders do not have any information on students' progress that would help them to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes they have made to the curriculum. As a result, leaders do not have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the new provision.
- As part of the new curriculum, there is less explicit focus on the development of academic literacy and numeracy skills. However, students benefit from a range of regular opportunities to improve their functional literacy and numeracy skills as part of their project-based work. For example, students learn to follow written instructions and calculate the value of different items in a shopping basket. Consequently, students are supported well to develop the practical skills they will need when they leave the sixth form.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is variable. Some teaching is poorly matched to students' needs and abilities. However, work in students' folders indicates that teachers are becoming more adept at challenging students from their different starting points. Students' work also indicates that students are more engaged in the new curriculum.
- Students benefit from an extensive range of opportunities that enhance their personal development. For example, most students complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and students benefit from highly individualised opportunities for work experience.
- All students complete their studies in the sixth form, with the majority staying until the end of Year 14. All students advance to an appropriate range of destinations, with most continuing to access specialist provision. Students benefit from effective arrangements that ease the transition to their next destination. Questionnaires completed by former students indicate that the majority feel happy, safe and well looked after in their new settings.

School details

Unique reference number	105622
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10032447

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
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Rhodes
Headteacher	Keith Cox
Telephone number	0161 231 2590
Website	www.grange.manchester.sch.uk
Email address	admin@grange.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about the curriculum, preventing bullying, use of the pupil premium, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium and PE and sport premium, and SEN and/or disabilities provision.
- All pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. An increasing proportion of pupils also have either additional behavioural difficulties or complex needs.

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are boys.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- Pupils join the school at different stages of their primary and secondary education.
- There are currently no pupils in the early years.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons jointly with senior leaders. Lessons were seen on most pathways in the different key stages.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books within lessons. Additionally, a sample of work was scrutinised, including folders that recorded evidence of pupils' achievements.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were also held with a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with the school's quality assurance partner.
- Inspectors met with a group of teachers and teaching assistants, as well as other members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke formally with pupils from the primary and secondary phases. They also spoke informally with pupils during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors observed pupils arriving at school and spoke to parents as they dropped off their children. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour outside of formal lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, performance information for all year groups and records on behaviour, exclusions and pupils' safety and welfare.
- Inspectors considered 39 responses from members of staff to the inspection questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire and only five responses to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. Inspectors considered three comments that were made by parents on Ofsted's freetext service.

Inspection team

Will Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector
Cole Andrew	Ofsted 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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