

Swale Inclusion Service

Ufton Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JB

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are consistently good. Systems tracking the amount of progress that pupils make in their work do not yet have a positive enough impact.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Levels of persistent absenteeism in Years 9 and 10 are high.
- Those responsible for governance do not hold leaders to account well enough. They do not ensure that the school's website is compliant with requirements.
- Additional funds for disadvantaged pupils are not monitored carefully enough to ensure a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Staff often do not have high enough expectations of pupils.
- Teachers are not yet making effective use of assessment information to ensure that pupils are given activities that meet their needs. This is particularly the case in mathematics at key stage 3.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has successfully steered the school through a period of significant change. He has restored staff confidence and has already secured improvements, such as in monitoring behaviour.
- Pupils' personal development is good. There are trusting relationships between staff and pupils. Staff have a clear understanding about how to support pupils' emotional well-being.
- Careers advice and guidance is well planned. Most pupils progress onto further training and apprenticeships.
- Teachers and other adults promote clear anti-bullying messages. Pupils say bullying is not an issue.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it enables pupils to make rapid progress, by:
 - using assessments to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs, particularly in mathematics at key stage 3
 - ensuring that teachers have the highest expectations and challenge pupils appropriately in lessons.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - checking pupils' work regularly to monitor the amount of progress that has been made
 - ensuring that additional funds for disadvantaged pupils have a positive impact on their progress and outcomes
 - improving overall attendance and reducing the rate of persistent absenteeism, particularly in Years 9 and 10, by working with parents more effectively
 - ensuring that the management committee holds leaders firmly to account for the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that the school's website meets requirements.

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.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and the management committee have not ensured that the overall effectiveness of the school is good. This is because teaching does not always challenge pupils sufficiently to help them make good progress from their starting points.
- When leaders look at pupils' work, they do not give enough attention to the amount of progress pupils have made. Consequently, leaders are not fully aware where progress is strongest and weakest in the school.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not always well spent. Leaders do not evaluate whether pupil premium funding has had any positive impact on the progress and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. The school has not carefully considered how the funding will be used to remove pupils' barriers to learning.
- More positively, leadership has managed the move and restructure successfully. They have quickly instilled in staff a positive can-do approach that has ensured that pupils have not been too unsettled by the recent changes.
- The new headteacher has made a strong start and has introduced consistent systems that apply throughout the school, not just in either key stage 3 or 4. The behaviour monitoring system is beginning to have an impact. The assessment system clearly shows pupils' skills on entry to the school and is beginning to track their progress. However, the system is new and has had too little time to demonstrate a positive impact on pupils' progress. Other improvements include a significant reduction in the number of pupils who leave the school in Year 11 without further plans for education, employment or training.
- Leaders recognise that improvements need to be made and have correctly identified and prioritised the areas that need to be addressed.
- Parents who were spoken to during the inspection are positive about the school. They said that they 'couldn't thank staff enough' for the support that they have given to their children. All praised the good communication from the school, such as the regular telephone calls that often celebrate the positive achievements of their children.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and engaging curriculum. Subjects often motivate pupils because they see the relevance to their future lives. In food technology, for example, pupils develop useful skills, such as learning how to scramble an egg or make a pizza. Pupils in key stage 3, who are on six-week placements, develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. Those pupils who are in key stage 4 experience a diverse range of subjects, including psychology and sociology. These subjects provide pupils with an understanding as to how families and society work and often provide pupils with a clearer insight into their own lives.
- Work-related learning is effective. Pupils gain a wide range of valuable skills when attending courses, such as in construction. Work-experience opportunities are numerous and include areas such as mechanics. Pupils receive effective careers advice and guidance which enables pupils to develop clear plans for their future.

- Extra-curricular activities have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. For example, during the annual sailing trip pupils spend a week on board a sailing boat. Although at first some may be a little reticent, pupils quickly see the paramount importance of following the captain's orders immediately. Staff report that this trip often changes pupils' attitudes to learning.
- Additional funding for special educational needs is appropriately spent on providing a range of resources and therapies. These have a positive impact on pupils' well-being and progress. The school does not receive any Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding.
- Leaders value the useful support and advice that has been provided by the local authority during this period of change.

Governance of the school

- The management committee has not ensured that the school's website includes all the information that it should. For example, there are no details about how the pupil premium funding has been spent. The management committee has not carefully assessed the impact of the funding on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes.
- Minutes of meetings show that much time has been spent on the finances and restructure of the school. Not enough time has been spent in holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make.
- Members of the management committee have significant expertise in areas such as education: many are leaders from local schools. They have ensured that, due to the restructure, the school is better placed to move forward.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The new leadership team has worked tirelessly to ensure that there is a safe culture in the school. Pupils, including those in key stage 4 who have just moved from the other site, say that they feel safe.
- Staff are well trained to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect, child exploitation and extremism. They are alert to the fact that pupils at this school are vulnerable. Staff work well with support agencies to provide appropriate care and guidance.
- Parents, who spoke with inspectors, all said that their children feel safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Across the school, there is variability in the expectations that teachers have of pupils in lessons. Work seen in books is not always challenging enough. As a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress.

- Teachers do not always use assessment information about how well pupils are doing to plan future work that matches their needs. As a result, pupils can sometimes find work too hard or too easy.
- Teaching in sport is effective as pupils are given clear steps about how to improve their performance. Staff provide appropriate encouragement. In one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils who were initially reluctant to develop their running skills were gently encouraged and were soon taking part in relay races. Pupils have numerous opportunities to improve their individual and team sporting skills in activities such as football, badminton and running.
- Teaching assistants provide calm and sensitive support to pupils in lessons. They use a range of effective strategies to help pupils to re-engage in their learning.
- In reading, any pupil who is identified as requiring additional assistance is given careful support to improve their skills. Staff help pupils to develop the perseverance and resilience to become confident readers. Some most-able pupils develop a strong interest in reading. Leaders have ensured that books provided are age-appropriate and match pupils' interests.
- In most cases, relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Teachers work hard to develop pupils' confidence in subjects that they may find hard. They continue to help pupils even after they have left the school. One notable example of this was when teachers worked with an ex-pupil to help them achieve success in passing the mathematics examination for entry into an elite military unit.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The well-being of pupils is the priority of the staff. Pupils appreciate the interest that adults show in them. Staff work hard to make sure that pupils are well informed about how to keep safe, such as when using the internet.
- Staff also make sure pupils are safe when outdoors. For example, during the recent hot weather they realised that some pupils were going in the sea with little understanding of tides. Staff used a local incident, where a young person had to be rescued after being cut off by rising sea waters, to illustrate the possible dangers pupils may face.
- The school has an effective personal, social and health education programme. This provides pupils with useful support to address their health and emotional well-being needs. Staff work with a wide range of different organisations to ensure that pupils have useful information on subjects such as relationships.
- Leaders give pupils experiences designed to boost their self-esteem, including activities such as horse riding and national award schemes.
- Over time, most pupils develop an understanding about how to be a successful learner. This is shown by the fact that almost all pupils move on to further training and apprenticeships.

- Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying at the school. The school takes appropriate action to resolve any issues that have occurred in the past.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance across the school is well below the national average and this slows the amount of progress pupils can make. Persistent absence is high, especially for pupils in Years 9 and 10. Despite the efforts of the diligent family liaison officer, strategies to improve attendance have not yet had a positive enough impact.
- There are sometimes incidents of inappropriate behaviour around the school, where pupils walk out of lessons or try to leave the building. These are usually well managed by experienced staff who have the skills to encourage pupils to return to their learning. Additionally, staff training in delivering therapies, such as drawing and talking therapy, has had a positive impact on reducing incidents of inappropriate behaviour.
- Breaktimes are usually convivial, with staff helping pupils to play games such as chess. For most pupils, behaviour tends to improve as they settle into school. This is because pupils start to understand more about the consequences of poor behaviour choices.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils often join the school with low starting points. They do not make the rapid progress needed to help them make up for prior underachievement. This is because teaching and pupils' attendance require improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, make inconsistent progress. Leaders do not carefully analyse the progress of disadvantaged pupils or closely monitor the use of funding to secure improvement for these pupils. Consequently, funding has a variable impact on improving these pupils' outcomes.
- In mathematics, pupils' progress is variable. In key stage 3, progress for many pupils is often slow. This is because not enough account is taken of what a pupil already knows, and work provided is sometimes too simple. In key stage 4, progress is often stronger because teachers check more carefully where pupils have gaps in their learning and then provide work to address these gaps.
- In English, pupils develop growing skills in comprehension. They can describe plots and characters in the books they have read. Skills in poetry writing have been developed effectively.
- The most able pupils do well in subjects such as art. For example, pupils had created their own pop-art design mask in bold primary colours. In food technology, most-able pupils had designed an imaginative horror cake.
- Almost all pupils who attend the school have some form of special educational need and/or disability. They make similar rates of progress to others in the school.

- In 2016, most Year 11 pupils obtained level 1 qualifications, a few obtained GCSE A* to G passes in subjects such as English and mathematics. Some pupils obtained short GCSE qualifications in psychology and sociology. Pupils also achieved success in obtaining certificates in a range of subjects such as cookery and preparation for working life. Some pupils who completed work-related learning achieved BTEC qualifications in construction or mechanics.

School details

Unique reference number	134325
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10032488

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Alan Barham
Headteacher	Nick Rogers
Telephone number	01795 436936
Website	swaleinclusionsservice.co.uk
Email address	office@sis.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium, governance, examination and assessment results or charging and admissions on its website.
- The school caters for pupils who have been excluded or who are at risk of exclusion. Almost all pupils have some identified special educational need and/or disability. Nearly all have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils have additional needs associated with autistic spectrum disorder, speech and language or hearing impairment. Very few pupils have an education, health and care plan. Some pupils have had significant periods out of full-time education.
- Many pupils who join key stage 3 are on short-term placements of approximately six weeks. They are often reintegrated back into mainstream school or specialist provision. Most key stage 4 pupils remain at the school until the end of Year 11.

- The proportion of pupils who are registered for receiving the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- Since the last inspection, there have been a considerable number of changes regarding leadership, pupil numbers, staff numbers and the school sites. These changes have been due to a reduction in the number on roll. Previously there were over 100 pupils; now the school is registered for 45 pupils. Currently, there are 41 pupils on roll: 21 are in key stage 3 and 20 are in key stage 4. The reduction in pupil numbers necessitated a major staffing restructure. Over half of the staff have recently left. On 26 June 2017, the school changed from being situated on two sites to one. Key stage 4 moved over to Ufton Lane. The current headteacher became acting headteacher in November 2016, while continuing his role as head of key stage 4 at the other site. He was appointed to be the substantive headteacher in April 2017. At the same time, the rest of the senior leadership team took up their roles, including the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work, often with members of the senior leadership team. A physical education lesson held at the local park was also visited.
- Discussions were held with pupils regarding what it is like to be a pupil at this school. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to three parents on the telephone and also spoke to a member of a pupil's family at the end of the school day. There was an insufficient number of responses to the online Parent View questionnaire.
- Inspectors held meetings with the leadership team, staff, members of the management committee and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed documents including the school's self-evaluation, development plan, external reports, behaviour and incident logs, safeguarding records, lesson plans, examples of pupils' work and progress information.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Sackett

Ofsted Inspector

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