

Caroline Chisholm School

Wooldale Road, Wootton Fields, Northampton, NN4 6TP

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of students make good progress as the very good examination results continue to improve throughout the school, building on the strong performance by pupils in the primary phase.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school. Some outstanding teaching was observed. There is evident enthusiasm on the part of both teachers and students to achieve.
- Relationships between teachers and students are strong as is shown by the ease of collaboration and questioning as well as respect for teachers' expertise.
- The sixth form is good and continues to grow, and teaching and learning are good. There is a broad range of subjects on offer to its students, all of whom are making good progress to the next stage of their careers, including those from vulnerable groups.
- Very high attendance rates show students' enthusiasm for school and their behaviour around the school is exemplary. They are well informed and confident about their own safety. There are very few instances of bullying and effective school systems deal with them should they arise.
- The Principal is well supported by a large recently expanded senior team who all share high ambitions for students' success. This is shown by the excellent way checks are carried out and teachers helped to improve.
- Subject and phase leaders help to improve the school by drawing up plans that ensure students have access to a broad range of subjects. Students make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A well-qualified governing body keeps a close eye on how well the school is doing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' attitudes to learning in a small number of lessons are not yet exemplary as they do not always engage fully in lessons, especially when teaching lacks challenge.
- Some students who need extra help are making less secure progress due to support staff not always being deployed effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders, and two assemblies. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, the headteacher of a local feeder school and school staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors analysed the 122 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and three emails during the inspection.
- Inspectors analysed the 111 responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection.
- They observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the monitoring of the quality of teaching, student tracking and examination analysis, performance management documentation, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to attendance, behaviour, safety and bullying, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

James Coyle, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Paul O'Shea	Additional inspector
Rena Saggu	Additional inspector
Chris Ockendon	Additional inspector
Cheryl Jackson	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an above-average size all-through school. It serves pupils living in Wootton, Wootton Fields, Grange Park and the surrounding areas of the Nene Valley Northamptonshire.
- The great majority of students are of White British heritage, with very few speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- There is specialist support for students with Asperger's syndrome and autism who are integrated into mainstream provision for the majority of their time in school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The school accesses additional work-related education for some of its students through Northampton College.
- It meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school became an academy in August 2011. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Among its awards the school has the International School Award, Leading Edge, Eco Schools and Healthy Schools status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013 leaders should:
 - ensure that deployment of in-class support models the best practice established in school and enables all disabled students and those who need extra help or with a statement of special educational needs to achieve high levels of engagement and commitment to learning
 - build on the existing good and outstanding teaching across the school to ensure that there is sufficient challenge to meet the needs of all learners in every lesson, so that all students fully engage in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average for these age groups. The majority of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make progress that exceeds expectations.
- In the Year 6 national tests, standards achieved were above average and school data and pupils' work seen during the inspection confirm this.
- The school's own tracking of pupil progress, as well as evidence from observations of learning, confirms that most groups of students are currently achieving well.
- Pupils who need extra help or with a statement of special educational needs generally make good progress relative to their starting points, though there are exceptions where pupils have less effective support.
- Results at the end of Year 11 have been high for the last three years, including the last validated data in 2011. The proportion of more able students exceeding expected progress is below national figures but the provisional 2012 figures show improvement.
- From the outset, students are given many opportunities to read widely and they read well. In particular, the involvement of parents is a strong feature, using workshops, home-school reading journals as well as shared targets to support students.
- In an outstanding Year 6 literacy lesson focusing on drama for writing, pupils gave excellent oral descriptions of characters, in the process choosing a wide range of words which supported their earlier reading and writing on a fairground story.
- Learning and progress in the sixth form are good as a result of the range and variety of courses tailored to suit students and the evident care and guidance that support its inclusive nature.
- Achievement post-16 is good and improving. It is not outstanding because the number of students gaining the higher grades at A level is not as high as it could be, although it is improving.

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good but is not outstanding because not all students are fully engaged in their learning. This is because a few lessons lack sufficient challenge to retain students' interest.
- Some outstanding teaching was observed in a Year 1 class where pupils made rapid progress in their learning through effective use of teacher questioning to elicit responsive answers that revealed high levels of previous knowledge and understanding.
- Key features of good teaching observed were teachers' high expectations, good subject knowledge and planning that provided a wide range of engaging activities. Year 10 students in a GCSE Spanish speaking test were asked to provide original responses when talking about health. The teacher provided challenge both to individuals and then as pairs, allowing them to judge their own responses.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is effective. Communication skills are strong

across the school as students speak with confidence either in response to questions from adults, working together in peer groups or making presentations at assemblies.

- Students are provided with assessment and feedback about their work which they say helps them to improve. This was observed in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where a marking scheme guided their learning and introduced challenge when they worked together.
- Survey evidence shows that parents are clear that teaching is good and pupils share this view.
- The use of support staff varies in the extent to which they are fully involved in lesson planning and deployed to best effect so that students gain maximum benefit from their input.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and most students make good progress and achieve well. However, in some lessons there was little opportunity for students to provide their own explanations, leaving much of the speaking to the teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's expectation of behaviour is high and is underpinned by a robust pastoral support system and an outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural programme.
- Students are courteous and polite in class and around the school. They show respect to each other and adults.
- The majority of parents confirm that students are well behaved and that the school is a safe place to learn.
- Occasionally, students become distracted in class when the teaching is insufficiently challenging.
- Students' consistently above-average attendance attests to their enjoyment of school.
- Students' attendance and progress at work-related courses away from the school site is tracked and monitored and shown to be good.
- Incidents of all forms of bullying including homophobic and cyber-bullying are rare and students report that they are dealt with effectively. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last two years and fixed-term exclusions are very rare.

The leadership and management are good

- An experienced and effective Principal leads a large newly expanded senior team who share and convey his high ambitions for students' success and wellbeing.
- Excellent performance monitoring systems support effective self-evaluation and professional development across the school which results in improved outcomes for students as teaching strengthens.
- The broad and balanced range of subjects on offer meets the needs, aptitudes and interests of students and is enriched by a wide range of activities both during and after school.
- The school's entrepreneurial, business, community and international links underpin the high-quality learning that takes place and contribute to students' strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. Local links compare and contrast life in the school's partner school in

Australia and prepare them well for life in a global society.

- The sixth form has continued to grow and develop. The broad range of subjects it offers reflects its inclusive intake and resources are deployed to ensure that all students make good progress.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, as shown in regular school surveys and Parent View results.
- The school meets safeguarding requirements.
- Northamptonshire County Council through its Chief Executive maintains ongoing checks on the academy's progress on behalf of the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is aware of its new responsibilities and maintains a strategic view on the direction the school is taking
 - systematically challenges school leaders on the performance information it receives
 - has adopted Teachers' Standards to secure improvements in teaching and students' achievement
 - monitors the performance management of staff closely
 - is well informed about the financial arrangements of the school, both in the short and long term, including the positive impact of the pupil premium.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137089
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	395681

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1863
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Atkinson
Headteacher	Tony Downing
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01604 669200
Fax number	01604 669201
Email address	office@ccs.northants.sch.uk

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