

Woodfield School

Hawthorn Lane, Coventry CV4 9PB

Inspection dates

19–20 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, the new leadership team and school governors have taken very effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the secondary school. Teaching is now good.
- The quality of teaching in the primary school is never less than good and a significant proportion is outstanding.
- From usually low starting points, pupils often make rapid progress when they first join the school because their needs are assessed thoroughly and work is set to fill gaps in their learning.
- The school effectively identifies pupils' particular needs and interests and provides older pupils with appropriate work experience and placements. Excellent links with alternative providers ensure that pupils are as well prepared as possible for life after school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and mutually respectful. Pupils' welfare is given top priority so that they feel school is a safe place to be. This supports pupils to begin to learn to manage their own difficulties and behaviours, and they make good strides in their personal development.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good and well managed.
- Pupils in The Spinney receive a very personalised curriculum and begin to take pride in their achievements.
- The school provides highly regarded outreach support and advice to mainstream schools in the city.
- The principal and directors of the primary and secondary departments are providing strong leadership so that there is good capacity for further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not get enough chance to practise their writing skills in all subjects.
- Occasionally pupils spend too long on work they can already do.
- Pupils in the secondary school are not able to access a sufficiently good range of vocational subjects or sporting activities.
- There is insufficient specialist expertise in the field of autism spectrum conditions to meet the increasingly complex needs of pupils being admitted to the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise achievement by:
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to practise extended writing in all subjects of the curriculum
 - ensuring pupils are always suitably challenged to move on quickly as soon as they have gained mastery of a task
 - increasing staff knowledge and skills in working with the increasing proportion of pupils with autism spectrum conditions
 - extending the range of after-school and lunchtime activities, particularly in sport, in the secondary department.
- Work with the appropriate authorities to improve accommodation in the secondary school to offer a broader vocational curriculum and to enhance physical education, sport and other outdoor activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Following the previous inspection, the governing body took steps to strengthen the management structure of the school. There is now a very strong leadership and middle management team who are driving forward rapid improvement.
- The principal takes a highly effective strategic role and provides clear direction to his team. He sets high standards and ambitious targets for school improvement and has introduced high-quality performance management for all staff, which is holding every individual to account for improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. He is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for every pupil to succeed.
- The extremely effective leadership of the two directors of the primary and secondary departments has led to improvements in all aspects of the school's work. Standards in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the primary department have been consistently high for some time and the secondary department is rapidly catching up.
- Directors and middle managers check the work of staff and the progress pupils make. This ensures that governors and school leaders are provided with accurate information so that action is quickly taken to deal with any areas of concern.
- Leaders and managers have introduced a very effective assessment and pupil progress procedure to replace national curriculum levels. The frequent pupil review meetings are securing more rapid progress and achievement.
- The development of staff skills and knowledge, particularly in the secondary department, is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. However, the school is admitting pupils with increasingly complex needs, particularly in the field of autism spectrum conditions. Although staff meet the needs of these pupils well, staff have not yet developed specialist expertise in this area to ensure the best possible provision is made for them.
- Senior leaders and middle managers have reviewed the provision in The Spinney. Pupil numbers have been reduced, staffing strengthened and the curriculum revised to ensure it matches the individual needs of these pupils. As a result they are making much better progress and achieving external awards.
- The teacher and teaching assistant in the outreach service provide highly effective advice and guidance to mainstream schools to build their capacity to manage pupils in their own settings. However, if placements break down or specialist placements are deemed more appropriate, the teacher puts well-planned moves in place to ensure successful transfer to Woodfield or other settings. Similarly, a few pupils make such good progress at Woodfield that they are able to return to mainstream schools and are provided with the necessary planning and support to ensure that placements are successful.
- The curriculum is well planned throughout the school. Primary topics are lively and designed to interest boys in their learning. Sport and performing arts are particular strengths in the primary department. In the secondary school English and mathematics are offered at different levels to ensure that all pupils can achieve an external award which is well matched to their ability. However, the vocational curriculum for older pupils is restricted by the accommodation, as is access to the range of sports on offer due to a lack of outdoor facilities and after-school provision.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong, especially in the primary department. Although secondary pupils are given sound moral and social guidance and these aspects pervade all aspects of the curriculum, pupils have too few opportunities to develop leadership and responsibility skills. Nevertheless, there are many trips out of school and pupils enjoy activities such as residential trips to activity centres which they would otherwise rarely have the chance to experience. The school works with external agencies to provide pupils with a good understanding of democracy and the rule of law, including accepted British moral values.
- Leaders and managers are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are looked after by the local authority do as well as other pupils in the school. Pupil premium funding is used to provide well-focused support, particularly through additional staffing to provide well-targeted interventions to disadvantaged pupils needing extra support.
- The school is designated as a provision for boys but the school has been asked to admit a small number of girls in the primary school. These few girls do well because of the personalised approach to their learning and sometimes return to mainstream provision.
- Older pupils receive good careers guidance from an external agency. School staff are very committed to matching pupils to continuing education or work placements which meet their needs and interests. After

pupils leave the school, staff provide support where necessary to maintain successful placements. Links with parents and carers are strong. Parents and carers speak extremely positively about the support the school provides to them, of the work of the pastoral staff and of the staff in The Spinney. Parents and carers feel the school makes a strong contribution to keeping their boys out of trouble and in preparing them for their future lives.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The very effective governing body is a major contributor to school improvement. For example, governors are actively involved in checking on aspects of the curriculum and undertake learning walks and work scrutiny alongside school leaders to help them understand how well staff are performing and pupils are progressing.
- Governors have ensured that the leadership of the school has been strengthened to provide a strategic overview and ensure they are given high-quality information. The restructuring of senior and middle management has created good opportunities for more staff to take on responsibilities and develop their leadership skills.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the use of additional funding, especially the pupil premium, and understand its impact in closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that the primary sports funding is put to particularly good use, with primary pupils enjoying a huge range of innovative activities.
- Governors are aware of the shortcomings in the accommodation in the secondary school and have held discussions with the local authority.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, including in alternative provision and on trips out of school. All activities are scrupulously risk-assessed. Liaison with external agencies, such as the youth offending team and social care, ensures information is shared to protect pupils' welfare and keep them safe. Pastoral managers are in frequent contact with parents and other agencies. Governors carry out their statutory duties carefully.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The school's leaders and managers have been committed to raising standards in teaching, particularly in the secondary department, since the previous two inspections. As a result of robust performance management and professional development of staff, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good across the school.
- In the primary department, teaching and learning is always at least good and a significant proportion is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching including assessment, planning and marking is monitored on a frequent basis by middle managers so that it is continually improving. Assessment of pupils' work is now checked with other schools to ensure that it is accurate, and there are plans to develop this further.
- Teachers check pupils' work regularly. The school's marking policy is followed consistently and pupils say they value the feedback they are given because it helps them to know how to improve their work. Pupils are given time to respond to marking which is individualised to ensure that each pupil makes the best progress they can.
- In the primary department, teachers are creative at finding topics which will motivate pupils, help them to remain on task and complete work set. For example, in an English lesson linked to the topic of ancient Egypt, key stage 2 pupils were finding and using time conjunctions through acting out and describing the process as they mummified a 'dead' body. They used imaginative resources such as a sponge for the brain. 'We can throw that out now, you won't be needing it any more', one pupil said as he flung it aside.
- Younger pupils often follow an early years curriculum after admission in order to make up for early gaps in their learning and to give them the basic skills they need to build a firm foundation in literacy and numeracy. For instance, recently admitted pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 were seen to work on the very earliest stages of phonics to begin building reading skills.
- Secondary pupils enjoy a varied curriculum with as wide a range of options as can be offered in the limitations of the accommodation. These subjects help them to make choices as they move on to college or into the workplace. For example, Year 10 pupils were encouraged to multi-task independently in a food technology lesson, following instructions to make soup and a bread roll.
- All opportunities are taken to practise mathematics, English and science in other lessons in the curriculum. For instance, in a food technology lesson pupils had to predict the effect of yeast and

understand the science behind the bread rising, use their mathematical skills to weigh ingredients and their English to write up the findings.

- In a few lessons pupils are not challenged to develop their writing skills sufficiently because they are given worksheets to complete which do not stretch them sufficiently. Occasionally, especially when pupils are taught as a whole group, those who have already grasped the concept are not moved on quickly enough.
- Pupils who attend The Spinney are taught in a highly personalised way to meet their needs and manage behaviour which can present significant challenge.
- Teachers often use practical methods to support learning, as seen in The Spinney in an English session on persuasive writing. The teacher had brought in a bicycle and together they looked at the various components which could be selling points in an advertisement. Through excellent in-depth questioning, the teacher encouraged pupils to find their own appropriate language to enhance their pieces of writing.
- Sport in the primary department is a particular strength, with the achievement of the quality mark for physical education and sport. Through use of the primary sports funding as well as the school's own resources, a huge range of sports are offered both in the school day and through lunchtime and after-school clubs so that all pupils are able to enjoy success in a chosen activity. Although physical education is taught well in the secondary department, pupils do not have the same opportunity to access an enriched sporting curriculum.
- A considerable amount of work has gone into developing the skills of teaching assistants to support learning rather than simply to manage behaviour. As a result, in the majority of lessons seen, teaching assistants acted as good educators alongside teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have reviewed the staffing structure to develop strong pastoral roles. Pupils and their families feel well supported by the pastoral managers who advocate on their behalf, for example in multi-agency meetings, where necessary. The school invariably acts as the coordinator for these multi-disciplinary meetings to ensure that pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs are well understood and to ensure that the future is well planned when they are due to leave.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe through work across the curriculum to raise awareness of the dangers of misuse of technology, drugs and alcohol. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the negative effects of risky behaviour and staff support them to put this knowledge to good effect in their personal lives.
- One pupil said that he felt encouraged to disclose when he had been a bully as well as express any concerns about being bullied. Pupils were clear that they feel safe in school and that any concerns will be dealt with. They have a good knowledge about different forms of bullying covered in personal, social, health and economic education lessons, and during assemblies. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue in school.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and often have strong views about the behaviour of others. They are helped to develop an understanding of when they themselves display poor moral values. The strong links with external agencies and alternative providers helps pupils to develop their citizenship skills and cultural knowledge. There is a school council but few other opportunities to take responsibility and gain leadership skills.
- Pupils are kept safe in school, in trips out and when attending alternative provision through careful risk assessments of all activities. Pupils are encouraged to participate in outdoor and sporting activities to build resilience and self-esteem and this is particularly successful in the primary department.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour is managed well in lessons. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are proud to achieve well. Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that they are able to succeed while also challenging them to do more. Occasional difficulties linked to pupils' learning difficulties or disabilities may sometimes affect a pupil's participation in lessons. However, they are usually quickly supported back into lessons after some individual counselling.
- Relationships are a strength of the school. The commitment of the staff to ensuring each pupil can

develop personally as well as academically is obvious. Pupils feel nurtured and say they can always find a member of staff to talk to. Pupils are encouraged to do this rather than resort to disruptive behaviour. As a result, during the inspection behaviour never disrupted learning.

- Attendance is above average in comparison with other similar schools and is high in the primary department. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and want to learn. As one pupil put it: 'We are here to be mentally challenged', and over time the large majority of pupils rise to the challenges presented.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils enter the school at various ages and stages in their schooling. Most pupils have experienced disruptions to their learning, as a result of which they are rarely achieving as well as they are able when they enter Woodfield. Additionally, the majority of pupils have complex needs which have not always been met well in previous settings so that pupils often have gaps in their learning.
- The school undertakes initial assessments to find out what pupils know and can do and, from their usually low starting points, pupils make good and in some cases outstanding progress. This is often rapid to start with because the assessment highlights the gaps in their learning so that work can be set to fill them. The success they enjoy through completing tasks and activities helps to build their self-esteem.
- Staff have visited other schools to observe best practice and have undertaken professional development in the teaching of mathematics. Pupils are now making good progress in the subject at key stage 3 and 4 and gaining mastery of topics and external awards which will be helpful in their future lives.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their literacy skills. In the past and occasionally still, there has been an over-dependence on worksheets with limited opportunity to practise writing. As a result, progress in writing is not as strong as it could be but this is beginning to be addressed.
- The most-able pupils are supported to gain qualifications which match their abilities with a few pupils gaining GCSEs at A* to C grades, despite the disruptions to their learning during their schooling.
- The large majority of pupils in the school are disadvantaged and the gap between their achievement and of the minority of pupils who are not deemed to be disadvantaged is closing rapidly.
- Pupils attending The Spinney are encouraged to develop their self-esteem. Well-being assessments lead to well-planned interventions which enable the large majority to move on to successful placements post-16.
- Older pupils are encouraged to develop their skills as independent learners, for example through independent travel training. They are provided with extensive opportunities to get out into the community. Pupils attend alternative provision in colleges or with workplace providers which helps to build their resilience. Staff work with colleges and providers well to ensure that pupils are taking qualifications which match their requirements and all pupils leave with appropriate external awards. As a result pupils are well prepared for their future employment, training or education and the vast majority of leavers move on to successful placements.

School details

Unique reference number	131574
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10012416

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Luckett
Principal	Stephen Poole
Telephone number	02476 462 335
Website	www.woodfield.coventry.sch.uk
Email address	admin@woodfield.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2014

Information about this school

- Woodfield School provides for pupils with statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans for social, emotional and mental health needs, and associated behaviour difficulties. Almost all pupils have additional complex needs including autism spectrum conditions, speech, language and communication needs, and other related learning difficulties and disabilities.
- The secondary and primary departments are on separate sites some five miles apart.
- The Spinney, which is based on the primary site, caters for 15 key stage 4 boys who have failed to succeed in any other placement.
- Pupils usually arrive after periods of disruption in schooling, which contributes to low prior attainment. Pupils arrive at Woodfield at any age or stage in their schooling.
- Most pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language. There are currently three girls in the primary provision.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who receive support from pupil premium funding is about three quarters of the school population, which is very high. The number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority is also much higher than the average. Pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- Key stage 4 pupils attend a wide range of alternative providers, as part of their education, to gain experience in the workplace and to prepare them for life after school. These include: Henley College, City College, Belgrade Theatre, Herbert Art Gallery, Right Trax, Positive Youth Foundation, Brakes Project, Coombe Abbey, LE2, Motorvate Training, CBW, YMCA, and Learnfit Academy.
- Since the previous inspection a new principal has been appointed and there has been a staffing restructure, with new appointments to senior and middle leadership positions.
- The school provides an outreach advice, guidance and support service to mainstream schools in the city.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in a range of subjects across the primary and secondary school and in The Spinney. The majority of the observations were undertaken jointly with senior and middle leaders.
- Meetings and discussions were held with two governors, the principal, the two directors of the primary and secondary schools, with subject and key stage leaders, the outreach teacher, pastoral and behaviour managers, a parent and a group of pupils.
- Telephone conversations were held with the local authority representative and the school's improvement partner.
- A range of school documentation was reviewed relating to safeguarding, assessment, target setting, pupil progress, examination results, performance management of staff and alternative providers. Inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors examined pupils' work in their books when they visited classrooms and with middle leaders in a meeting.
- They took into account the responses from staff and the small number of parent comments submitted to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

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