

Woodlawn School

Drumoyne Gardens, West Monkseaton, Whitley Bay NE25 9DL

Inspection dates

11–12 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement and does not yet result in good achievement.
- Teaching and outcomes in English are not as strong as those in mathematics.
- Reading and writing had not been promoted well until recently. As a consequence, the quality of English work shows that older pupils, including the most able, are not progressing as well as they could.
- Some middle leaders are new to their roles and are at the early stages of developing their skills. They do not yet make an effective contribution to checking the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- Not all teachers are effective in using their questioning and feedback to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their learning, help them improve their work or to check the progress they are making.
- From their starting points, not all learners in the sixth form are making the progress that they should because teaching is variable and the curriculum is not providing sufficient choice for them to attain a broader range of qualifications.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have provided good leadership to change the culture of the school. As a result, the school is improving rapidly.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors' mix of relevant experience and expertise combines well to ensure that the drive towards excellence is relentless.
- Pupils' conduct and their attitudes to learning are consistently good. Pupils' safety and welfare is promoted effectively.
- Good training and development for teachers has improved the quality of teaching at the school.
- Improvements to the early years provision since the previous inspection ensures that children get off to a good start and make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven throughout lessons and is a particular strength of the school. Pupils are well prepared to take their places in modern British society.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to ensure that more pupils, including the most able, make rapid progress by making sure:
 - teachers use their questioning and feedback to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their learning and know what they need to do to improve further
 - older pupils use their phonics skills to support their reading and writing.
- Further improve teaching and the curriculum for learners in the sixth form so that they have greater opportunities to gain accreditation and are better prepared for employment and training.
- Continue to embed and develop newly allocated middle leadership roles to ensure they have a full impact in the ongoing drive for improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have demonstrated great drive and resilience to develop an ambitious culture and to raise the expectations of pupils and staff. They are determined that more pupils will realise their potential and gain qualifications. Their sharp analysis and accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and well-focused actions, have resulted in marked improvements to the quality of teaching and early years provision. As a result, pupils are making faster progress in their learning.
- Leaders make sure that pupils' achievement is tracked accurately and in detail. This has played a key role in improving teaching and pupils' outcomes, particularly in early years provision and in mathematics.
- Middle leaders are beginning to make a positive impact on the improvement of the quality of teaching. They have produced action plans and meet regularly with staff in order to raise standards in their subjects. However, some middle leaders are new, and have yet to show their full impact.
- The performance of teachers is managed well and support is provided if there is any underperformance. Teachers' pay is related well to the progress that pupils make and their contribution to the work of the school. Pupils are beginning to make better progress in their reading skills because training has developed teachers' skills.
- The curriculum is carefully designed to meet the personal development and welfare needs of the pupils as well as their communication needs. Pupils experience a good range of activities, both in and out of school, which are tightly matched to their individual needs. For example, they have opportunities to trampolining, to go on school trips to High Borrans adventure park and to enter school competitions. The quality of swimming activities is particularly impressive because pupils experience excellent teaching and therapy expertise to support their physical well-being, communication and social skills. However, the curriculum in the sixth form is not providing sufficient opportunities for learners to gain meaningful accreditation for their future training and work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school. It is interwoven through all aspects of pupils' learning. Pupils learn about right and wrong, and develop resilience, consideration of others and self-confidence in lessons. They talk about issues and British values, and become increasingly responsible. They respect other religions and cultures and are well prepared for future life in modern British multicultural society.
- The school's spending of government grants, such as the pupil premium funding, physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools and the Year 7 catch-up funding, is effective in raising the achievement of pupils eligible for support. For example, the introduction of new mathematics resources is helping to ensure that most pupils are making at least good progress against their mathematics targets.
- There are excellent partnerships and strong teamwork between school staff, health professionals based at the school and sensory services. These make sure that services are fully integrated into the school so that pupils receive the precise support they need for their medical conditions and communication development.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is a strength of the school. Since the last inspection a core of highly experienced governors have worked relentlessly, using their collective skills to closely monitor the work of the school and strive for high standards. They have been ably supported by the local authority who have brought additional expertise and skills.
 - Governors are informed well about the impact of the school's work. They have a good understanding of pupils' progress and can gauge for themselves the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' learning and personal development.
 - Governors regularly use their deep knowledge to question and challenge leaders about progress in all aspects of the school's work. For example, records of governing body meetings show that governors' monitoring visits inform topics such as safeguarding and the use of the school's additional funding.
 - The governing body has ensured that effective systems are in place to safeguard pupils, manage challenging behaviour safely and check the suitability of all adults who carry out work at the school.
 - Governors play an active role in the determination of teachers' and the headteacher's pay. As a result of their thorough grasp of how the quality of teaching impacts on pupils' outcomes, they have an informed understanding of the way leaders administer the school's performance management systems.

- Following the previous inspection, the governors have acted on the governors’ audit. They have received appropriate training and make frequent visits to school and have a clear schedule of planned meetings to check the school’s performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systems and policies to keep pupils safe are well maintained and consistently applied. Appropriate vetting systems ensure the recruitment of suitable staff and all receive appropriate training. Leaders carry out regular checks to keep pupils secure and to minimise potential risks. Strong links with parents ensure that pupils are well supported should any concerns arise. All staff have completed training about keeping pupils safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- Leaders have made excellent use of the support of the local authority who have provided both challenge and guidance. This has ensured high-quality monitoring of teaching and learning and support to strategies for improvements in reading and mathematics.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement despite improvements since the last inspection. Teaching is still too variable.
- Some teachers are unclear about what they intend pupils to learn. Questioning does not always probe their understanding to ensure teachers can identify their next steps. There is a lack of consistency, and as a consequence assessment information is not used well enough to help them check whether pupils have made enough progress or to tell them how they can improve their work.
- Some teaching does not help pupils explain their learning more fully to develop their thinking more deeply. Pupils were making good progress in those lessons where teachers questioned them skilfully and gave them time to think and talk about what they were learning. In a mathematics lesson the teacher checked the pupils knew their times tables to help them with their work on fractions.
- The teaching of phonics is still variable despite improvements in the teaching of reading and writing since the last inspection. Secondary-age pupils have too few opportunities to apply their writing skills and do not always use their phonics skills to support their reading and spelling, and this limits their progress.
- A wide range of means of communication is used effectively, including signs, symbols, routines, electronic tablets and ‘eyegaze’ technology. All staff are trained effectively so the communication is used seamlessly in learning activities. This was extremely successful in a lesson where eye movement technology was used to spot the difference between objects.
- Teachers manage pupils’ behaviour in lessons well. Pupils know what is expected of them; they respond positively to teachers’ consistently clear boundaries and to the praise and rewards they receive. Isolated incidents of more challenging behaviour are well managed by teachers, who skilfully de-escalate difficult situations and quickly get pupils back on track.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good. The school is a caring and welcoming place. Staff make pupils’ safety and well-being a priority. Pupils are kept safe, including when using equipment, resources and technology. Staff rightly liaise closely with parents, who feel their children are well cared for at school. Leaders check that pupils travel safely to and from school to make sure that pupils are safe.
- The school has excellent opportunities to work closely with therapists and other healthcare professionals to make sure that pupils’ medical and physical needs are met effectively. Staff in school, therefore, are fully informed by other professionals on how to support good-quality care to the pupils.
- The school’s investment in sports and use of the hydrotherapy pool has led to exceptional opportunities for personal achievements and building pupils’ self-confidence.
- Pupils’ skills of working and living independently are developed well. Pupils have frequent opportunities to make choices and play a full part in their learning through plentiful opportunities in the curriculum to do so. Older pupils, through an independent travel training programme, are prepared extremely well for the different means of transport they may need to use.

- The school's systems and procedures to care for pupils who require additional welfare support are strong. From the moment pupils arrive at school in the morning to the time they leave in the evening, adults are dedicated to their well-being. Pupils are friendly and happy in school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when they go to the beach for objects for their enterprise work, where they learn about staying safe in a real-life situation.
- Leaders' records of behaviour incidents show that bullying incidents are rare. Nevertheless, adults take appropriate action and make accurate records so that they intervene at an early stage.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The parents who responded to the online survey agree that this is the case.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, as is their attendance at school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons because they are interested in their activities and respond well to adult support.
- Relationships throughout the school are strong. It is a caring community characterised by mutual support and respect.
- Pupils move around the school safely and sensibly. They participate enthusiastically and energetically in activities at lunchtime, with good levels of supervision. High levels of adult support ensure that pupils eat safely and well.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour in lessons well. Pupils know what is expected of them; they respond positively to teachers' consistently clear boundaries and to the praise and rewards they receive. Isolated incidents of more challenging behaviour are well managed by teachers, who skilfully de-escalate difficult situations and quickly get pupils back on track.
- When relevant, pupils' particular behavioural needs are identified swiftly and specific information is given to teachers and teaching assistants so they know how to meet these needs. This ensures that pupils' behaviour is good for the majority of the time.

Outcomes for pupils

requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, progress, although improving, has remained variable. Current pupils' work shows accelerated progress since the start of the academic year for some pupils, particularly at the end of Reception class and key stage 2. However, progress is not accelerating securely for pupils at the end of key stage 4 and the sixth form.
- According to the school's tracking records, progress is faster in mathematics than in English. This is due to consistently high expectations of the quality of pupils' work. Progress is not as rapid in English as the school has only recently introduced new programmes to accelerate progress in reading and writing.
- Slower progress is most noticeable among the older pupils who have been longest at the school and until recently have not benefited from more skilled teaching for reading that focuses on their gaps in learning.
- The most-able older pupils have not been challenged well enough to make the progress they should in order to achieve more qualifications.
- There are no gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates.
- In the sixth form most learners successfully achieved a bronze award through the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, preparing them well for working with others and meeting challenges. Current school information shows learners are making better progress in their subjects in this academic year than previously. However, not enough learners have made the progress of which they are capable.
- Early communication skills for the most profoundly disabled pupils accelerate quickly. All groups of pupils make good progress in communication skills. Those who do not use spoken language utilise a wide range of devices and programmes that are well designed for their individual needs. This is particularly effective at minimising frustration and anxiety.
- Assessment information shows that there are no gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next stage of education and training. Last year, most Year 11 pupils gained a place in the sixth form or college.

Early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years provision is good. Leaders have accurately identified the priorities for improvement and the actions which have been taken to achieve them have been very successful. Communication with parents is excellent. Strategies for supporting children's communication and physical well-being are shared effectively so that they can be used by parents at home.
- Teachers are highly skilled at assessing children's capabilities and making sure that they receive exactly the right forms of support. Good teaching and the resilience built through a variety of experiences prepare children effectively for their transition into Year 1.
- Children, including those eligible for additional grants, make good progress, particularly in their early communication and language skills, through personalised plans carefully developed with specialist advice and support.
- Children are happy, well cared for and safe. They behave well and tackle tasks enthusiastically, happily sharing equipment and taking turns so there is no interruption to their learning. Staff are highly skilled at adapting learning quickly to avoid anxiety or poor behaviour.
- Outdoor areas are equipped with a range of good resources, which are used creatively by staff to meet children's individual needs and are developing children's writing skills particularly well.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Good leadership of the sixth form has ensured that teaching and learners' progress are improving. However, teaching is too variable as some tasks are not well enough tailored to present the right level of challenge for individual learners to make the progress they should.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum. However, it is not yet providing a good range of accreditation for work or college, or further opportunities for learners to develop and apply their English and mathematical skills.
- The number of learners that stay on in the sixth form is increasing. There are very effective advice and guidance systems on entry to the sixth form and to promote learners' understanding of progression and destination opportunities.
- Staff work tirelessly to boost learners' aspirations and self-confidence. The skills that learners need to relate to others, travel and live as independently as possible are at the core of activities in the sixth form. There are frequent opportunities for them to gain experiences outside school through strong partnerships with other schools. They can run a school café and sell the goods they have made in a purposeful way.
- Learners are enthusiastic and articulate, through whatever form of communication they use, and keen to tell of their achievements. They are increasingly supportive of each other's achievements. Behaviour is good and staff ensure that learners are safe, both within school and in all other placements or activities.
- Learners have good opportunities to try a range of different work environments so that they can make informed choices when they leave. There are strong partnerships with the range of settings that learners will move on to, so that transition is good.
- Learners' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding is good. They are well supported and encouraged to explore key topics related to current affairs and to take part in community projects and charitable fund-raising.

School details

Unique reference number	108652
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10012042

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	2–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hilary Harrison
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Wilson
Telephone number	0191 643 2590
Website	www.woodlawn.org.uk
Email address	woodlawn@northtyneside.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with a range of special educational needs or disability, including moderate learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical and medical disabilities and sensory impairments.
- All of the pupils attending the school have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Education is provided for children in the early years on a full- or part-time basis, depending on their readiness for full-time school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced changes in the senior leadership team. New leadership appointments were made in January 2015 including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and business manager. The governing body was strengthened with new governors, and a new chair of governors was appointed January 2015.
- A multidisciplinary team which includes speech and language, physiotherapy and health professionals is based in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all classes. In addition, short visits were made with the headteacher to classrooms to observe the use of assessment, the development of thinking skills and pupils' understanding of their progress,
- Pupils in Year 7, 11 and 12 read to an inspector.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils about their school, observed pupils' conduct around the school, and looked at work in their books. Questionnaires from 20 pupils were considered.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and leaders with responsibility for the early years, assessment, safeguarding, English and post-16 provision. An inspector also spoke to the governing body and had a meeting with the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and parent comments on free text.
- Questionnaires from 22 staff were considered.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's own systems for the tracking of pupils' progress, school evaluations, safeguarding documentation and policies and records of attendance.

Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janice Gorlach

Ofsted Inspector

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