

Woodspring School

Ebdon Lane, Bourton, Wick St, Lawrence, Weston-Super-Mare BS22 7YA

Inspection dates

20–22 September 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

- Pupils are well cared for and nurtured in a safe and secure environment. As a result, they thrive and enjoy school. They build trust in the adults around them and consequently their emotional well-being improves.
- Leaders have improved the standard of teaching and assessment to meet the individual needs of pupils more precisely.
- Teaching in reading, writing, literacy and numeracy is good so that pupils make good progress from their starting points in a wide range of subjects.
- Governors each have a designated area of responsibility. They work closely with the school to support leaders in all aspects of their work.
- Once pupils have had time to settle in school, their behaviour improves considerably. However, some still lose focus in lessons.
- The individualised curriculum develops the spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of pupils well. Personal, social and health (PSH) education lessons build pupils' self-esteem, understanding of positive relationships and how to keep safe.
- Pupils receive well-planned physical education lessons but lack opportunities to participate in physical activities as part of their day-to-day school life.
- Teachers' strong relationships help pupils and students develop positive attitudes to learning so that they are keen to attend. However, some pupils still have low attendance and display inappropriate behaviour.
- Governors and leaders have worked hard to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to promote pupils' learning and academic achievement further, the proprietor and school leaders should:
 - develop further strategies to help pupils improve their focus on learning
 - improve pupils' attendance and behaviour further.
- In order to promote pupils' personal development and physical well-being, provide further opportunities for physical exercise in addition to physical education lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have created a positive and harmonious environment. Consistent one-to-one help and support for pupils enable them to develop a sense of trust in the adults around them. Slowly, they begin to thrive. Staff patience, resilience and the cohesive team spirit are hallmarks of pupils' increasing sense of self-worth and academic improvements.
- The headteacher has established an ambitious culture of high standards and expectations. Staff have a deep understanding of the needs and views of pupils. Once settled in the school, pupils build their self-esteem and realise that they can achieve. Consequently, pupils begin to make good progress from their starting points.
- The strong relationships among staff and between staff and pupils develop tolerance and respect for all. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well through the curriculum and their time in the school.
- Leaders monitor the attendance and behaviour of pupils rigorously. Clear procedures to reduce emotional and behavioural outbursts are included in pupils' behaviour management plans. Individual records show that over time, incidents reduce in number and severity. In addition, leaders tackle pupils' use of inappropriate language effectively.
- Provision for pupils to gain an understanding of equality and diversity is good. Pupils are taught to respect others in line with the Equality Act and in particular with regard to protected characteristics. As a result, bullying is rare and handled well by staff. Pupils look after each other well.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain through the effective PSH education lessons and citizenship programme. A range of appropriate topics is explored, which develops pupils' knowledge and awareness. It also enables them to make wise decisions and choices for their well-being and safety.
- In whole-school time together each morning, teachers and pupils engage in discussion and debate. Topics extend pupils' general knowledge. They learn that it is acceptable to hold, and important to respect, different views. Staff work hard to teach pupils the dangers of extremism and to protect them from radicalisation.
- The curriculum is well adapted to pupils' individual learning needs and includes a range of subjects to suit their interests. This prepares them well for examinations and helps them to make appropriate choices for their future. For example, courses in child development and food technology have recently been introduced in addition to core subjects.
- School leaders monitor the quality of teaching effectively through a robust system of evaluation; as a result, teaching is typically strong. Teachers are given regular feedback on their teaching. This identifies areas for development and opportunities for further training. Staff are appreciative of this approach to professional development and that this has raised the quality of teaching and expectations for pupils' achievements in the school.
- Information on pupils' progress from regular written assessments and discussions is used to plan effective teaching. It is also used to develop next steps and has resulted in improvements in pupils' learning and overall achievements.

- On arrival in the school, many pupils do not believe that they will be able to sit examinations. As a result of the positive feedback they receive on their progress, pupils develop ambition to try. This growing ambition is also due to the patience, perseverance and high expectations of the senior leaders and staff who work very well together as a cohesive and supportive team.
- Pupils have specialist careers guidance for a wide range of vocational and academic courses and apprenticeships. As a result, they can make informed choices about the next stage of their education.

Governance

- The governors hold the headteacher to account for the achievement of the pupils. Support is provided to ensure that the school tackles any underperformance in outcomes for pupils or the quality of teaching. Regular reporting to the governors is timely and informative.
- The proprietor regularly visits the school in order to keep up to date with the quality of education being provided by staff and the resulting progress and personal development of the pupils. Members of the governing body, of which the proprietor is the chair, also regularly visit the school to provide support and guidance for staff and pupils.
- Each governor has a specific area of responsibility, and regular meetings in school ensure that areas for development are highlighted and addressed.
- The proprietor and governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Identified weaknesses result in actions being taken by the proprietor and school leaders.
- The proprietor ensures that finances are used suitably to maintain appropriate numbers of staff and that they are well resourced for their work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy which meets statutory requirements in line with guidance from the Secretary of State. The policy is published on the school's website and is available to parents in hard copy on request.
- The designated safeguarding and deputy safeguarding leads are trained to the appropriate levels. They ensure that all staff are trained appropriately and are kept up to date and informed of latest guidance and requirements in all aspects of safeguarding. Consequently, the school has a strong safeguarding culture. Leaders and staff are highly aware of their responsibility to safeguard pupils. Staff know the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns raised by a pupil or a member of staff.
- Effective procedures on e-safety, on how to keep safe and on protecting pupils from any extremism or radicalisation are taught well through the curriculum.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is tailored to meet the individual needs of pupils so that all make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching staff have high expectations and plan well so that lessons match the needs of individual pupils. Teachers are adept and experienced at encouraging pupils to learn; as a consequence pupils learn well.

- Pupils are taught in one-to-one sessions or in small groups. Teachers work with pupils to ensure that they know what is expected from them. However, not all pupils focus well at all times and their progress is less rapid in these lessons.
- When pupils are reluctant to work because of emotional upsets or setbacks and fear of failure, teachers encourage and reinforce learning to ensure that pupils can progress.
- Teachers use resources well to provide practical examples and help pupils to engage in their work. In science, for example, an effective range of resources is used. In English, teachers use pictures to help pupils write in more detail and to develop fluency in using more complex sentences. As a result, pupils' progress from their different starting points improves.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and monitored. Marking is secure, regular and acted upon. Teachers regularly discuss and share information so that the teaching across the curriculum collectively supports the learning of individual pupils.
- Pupils receive positive feedback no matter how small the effort or progress made. Feedback to pupils on their work is communicated verbally and recorded on their progress charts. Regular, weekly tutorials ensure that pupils remain on target, are listened to and know what to do next to maintain their progress.
- In pupils' folders and books, the range of work is good. Pupils are being well prepared for examinations across the curriculum.
- Pupils' folders for PSH education and citizenship provide clear evidence of teaching to enhance their personal and academic development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- On arrival, pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and knowledge of how to be a successful learner are often at very low levels. Slowly, with help this situation improves. Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem improve and they become more positive about being at school and their learning.
- The guided support from staff helps pupils settle in to the routines and expectations of the school. Staff have a deep understanding of the needs of the pupils and nurture pupils effectively in their personal development. The persistence focus of staff on pupils' academic achievements ensures that they make good progress.
- Pupils learn to stay safe through the positive work in PSH education and citizenship lessons. The school works particularly hard to ensure that pupils understand exploitative relationships. They also learn how to stay safe on the internet, including from cyber-bullying.
- Bullying in school is rare. Pupils have an increasing understanding of equality and diversity and are prepared to accept each other and those who are different because a positive culture of respect is expected at all times.
- Pupils have physical education lessons but they do not have sufficient opportunities to engage in physical activities at other times.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- In the early stages in school, emotional and behavioural outbursts are more common, often triggered by previous traumas. These are well managed by staff, who consistently implement behaviour management plans effectively. Staff support pupils extremely well. Over time, incidents reduce and behaviour improves. Pupils settle and begin to enjoy learning and realise that they are able to learn.
- Most pupils report that with time they are happy in school. For the majority of pupils, attendance has improved significantly compared with previous placements.
- For the small number of pupils who have previously persisted in missing school, attendance is also improving. There are clear procedures in place to eliminate risk from harm if any pupils go missing. Staff are stringent in following procedures for the safety of pupils.
- The school is focusing on developing further strategies to help improve the behaviour and attendance of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils have well below expected levels of academic development for their age on arrival in the school.
- All pupils have social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties (SEMHD), but not all have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans on arrival. All pupils are disadvantaged. The school provides appropriately for their academic needs.
- The school identifies effectively pupils' starting points in literacy and numeracy. Each pupil has an individual curriculum. The focus initially is to improve basic numeracy and literacy, including spelling and comprehension. Little by little, pupils make good progress so that they can begin to study a wider range of subjects.
- Pupils are well supported in one-to-one teaching so that they can progress quickly and improve their levels of achievement.
- Some pupils improve their reading so that they can enjoy simple books though still needing some support, while the most able pupils become keen to explore ideas in science and are eager to learn more.
- When they have established good routines of learning and are ready, those who are most able prepare for national examinations to suit their level of ability.
- Pupils who previously thought that they would never be able to sit any examinations find the ambition to try and with success. Results show that pupils are achieving in line with others nationally who have the same starting points.
- Pupils have individual careers guidance and advice for a range of academic and vocational courses and apprenticeships. For example, pupils from the previous cohort are now in college and studying hair and beauty and land management courses.
- The most able pupils have been successful in achieving a place in local colleges in Bristol and Weston-Super-Mare.

School details

Unique reference number	138132
DfE registration number	802/6010
Inspection number	10008578

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Christine Cameron
Chair	Christine Cameron
Headteacher	Kiks Sheppard
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,100
Telephone number	01934 707578
Website	www.aspirations.com/woodspring-school
Email address	kiks.sheppard@aspirationscare.com
Date of previous inspection	13–14 March 2013

Information about this school

- Woodspring School is an independent, co-educational, special school that is registered for boys and girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and for those who have autism spectrum disorder and special learning difficulties.
- The school opened in 2004 and is registered for 10 pupils aged 11 to 18. There are currently seven pupils on roll, all of whom attend full time. All have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs.
- The school is owned by Aspirations Limited, a registered company, and is set in a rural location near Weston-Super-Mare in North Somerset.
- The school makes use of additional facilities nearby for physical education.

- The school is overseen by a head of education. The current headteacher has been in post since 2014. From December 2016, the headteacher will formally become the head of education and the deputy headteacher will take up the post as headteacher. Specialists visit the school when required to provide one-to-one support for pupils as part of their individual education, health and care plans.
- The school aims to provide a consistent and personalised educational experience in an atmosphere of trust where each individual feels protected, understood and valued.
- The school had its last standard inspection in March 2013. In 2014, the school requested a material change to increase the age range from age 16 to 18. This was granted at the time of the inspection. All of the independent standards were met at the time of the material change.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in different subjects. Meetings were held with senior leaders and teaching staff and the inspector spoke with the local authority member of staff responsible for placements.
- The inspector examined a number of school documents to check compliance with the independent school standards. These included the school's website, policies, information about pupils' progress and the school's evaluation of its own work.
- Records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding were scrutinised.
- There were not enough responses to the online Parent View survey for these to be analysed.
- The inspector took account of six staff questionnaire responses and spoke with students.

Inspection team

Flora Bean, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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