

Cleaswell Hill School

School Avenue, Guide Post, Choppington, Northumberland NE62 5DJ

Inspection dates

2–3 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors have an unerring focus on providing excellent levels of provision, so pupils thrive and flourish in a safe environment, both personally and academically.
- Leaders at all levels share the values that underpin the school's work. Staff are highly motivated and highly skilled. They exemplify the very best relationships between pupils and adults. The school continues to develop and improve as a result.
- Senior and middle leaders search ceaselessly for the next steps in maintaining and improving the highest standards. As a consequence, the dynamic leadership responds astutely to the changing needs of pupils and the increasingly complex needs of the school population as a whole.
- Governors check that key priorities are pursued vigorously by leaders. They plan and check carefully that additional funding is used effectively. Governors balance unwavering support with incisive challenge that successfully promotes outstanding outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils across all key stages, including in the sixth form and early years, make sustained and substantial progress.
- Teachers make highly effective use of their deep and precise knowledge of pupils' needs to plan engaging and challenging learning tasks.
- Pupils develop confidence in their learning, and value their education. Attendance is high. Pupils' first-class attitudes to learning contribute significantly to the progress they make.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They show care and consideration for each other. Pupils enjoy their learning, including learning about other people and their different beliefs, lifestyles and backgrounds. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils learn effectively how to keep healthy, both physically and emotionally. Personalised packages of support, including a wide range of therapeutic interventions, are highly effective. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. They feel safe and very well cared for in school.
- Strong, highly effective leadership in both the sixth form and early years ensures that pupils develop personally and achieve very well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the quality of leadership and management by:
 - continuing to identify accurately the changing and future needs of the school's pupil population
 - strengthening the range of expertise in the school to meet the emerging needs of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Creative and dynamic leadership at all levels, led by the headteacher and governors, focuses on ensuring that the school's ambitions to provide the very highest standards of care and education are made real. As a consequence, pupils grow and develop important personal and learning skills that prepare them extremely well for the next steps in their education and training, and for life as young adults in modern Britain.
- Staff and pupils alike respond with enthusiasm to leaders' well-articulated and unswerving ambition to be the best they can. As a result, relationships between adults and pupils are of the highest standard.
- Leaders and governors have a highly accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and are highly skilled in securing the full support of staff, pupils and parents in furthering their endeavours to maintain and continually improve standards. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make extremely strong progress from their starting points across a wide range of learning, including English and mathematics.
- Governors challenge and support leaders in equal measure and to great effect. They check for themselves how well the school is enacting plans to use additional funding allocated for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, for disadvantaged pupils, for pupils eligible for support through the catch-up premium and for the primary physical education and sports funding. As a result of their planning and challenge to leaders, outcomes for pupils are excellent. Pupils grow in confidence, both personally and as learners.
- Leaders and governors listen to pupils' views and those of parents. They act incisively to develop the school's facilities, introduce appropriate therapies and target interventions that promote pupils' well-being and learning very effectively.
- Leaders use performance management arrangements to recognise staff members' successes in promoting pupils' achievement and well-being. They skilfully align further professional development to targets for continual improvement. By doing so, staff feel valued and that they play a part in the school's development and contribute in a wide range of ways to its successes. As a consequence, teaching and care for pupils are of the highest order.
- Teaching is highly effective across the school, because leaders' monitoring and evaluation lead to staff members' full engagement in the incessant search for improvement. Teachers use the school's evaluation to trial and develop teaching strategies that meet the learning needs of individual pupils and share best practice that sustains improvement.
- Leaders review the effectiveness of the curriculum continuously. They ensure that individual learning packages integrate a wide range of therapeutic interventions that support pupils' access to learning, for example the use of rebound therapy to develop physical coordination and concentration. Accurate and detailed baseline and ongoing assessments are used well to set longer- and medium-term targets that stretch pupils' learning and promote outstanding progress.

- The broad range of subjects enjoyed by pupils provides for effective progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The school provides an extended range of qualifications at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. Alongside highly personalised, expert independent careers advice, the curriculum offers pupils a broad and rich range of experiences and progression in learning that prepare them well for the next stages in their education and training.
- Leaders in the early years ensure that assessment is frequent and accurate. By doing so, leaders direct and manage learning that supports and challenges children to make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils and keep them safe are secure. Up-to-date training ensures that all staff have a well-developed understanding of the potential risks and dangers that pupils face. Staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders ensure that they plan thoroughly and systematically the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, so that pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of potential risks to their well-being. As a result, pupils are well informed and develop knowledge and skills that help keep them safe.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is highly effective.
- Governors demonstrate their impact by providing strong strategic leadership to realise their unswerving ambition for excellence.
- Governors use their skills effectively to evaluate the performance of the school, gathering their own evidence to check progress against key priorities and holding leaders to account.
- Governors challenge themselves and senior leaders to use all their skills and resources to achieve their aims, offering unstinting support, matched with evaluative critique.
- Governors ensure that all the required checks to ensure that only suitable adults work with pupils are carried out carefully and appropriately recorded on a single central register. They keep their own safeguarding training up to date and check that training for all staff is up to date. This helps keep pupils safe and helps them learn in a safe environment.
- Governors ensure that they have detailed knowledge of the school's work. They use this information to great effect in planning the spending of additional funding that promotes pupils' well-being and progression in learning from their starting points.
- Governors gather the views of pupils as part of their work to check that they are well provided for, for example in improving facilities for lunch and social times.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn about risks to their well-being and practise skills to manage them through the PSHE programme.

- Staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe, including in the early years and sixth form, and are vigilant. They know what they should do if they have a concern about a pupil.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Staff are highly trained and skilled in meeting pupils' needs. They use their very strong subject knowledge and professional expertise to deal with a wide range of special educational needs to plan pupils' learning astutely. Therefore, pupils consistently meet challenging targets, including in the early years and the sixth form.
- Teachers refine their planning effectively by using information from checks on pupils' progress to give pupils time to practise their skills and understanding. For example, pupils in a key stage 4 English lesson rapidly improved their writing skills by using their teacher's feedback to redraft their work and so improved the standard and quality of their work rapidly.
- Teachers use questioning effectively, forming questions that take account of pupils' language and communication difficulties, to check for and address any misunderstandings and to challenge them further to improve their work. For example, skilled questioning in a life-skills lesson enabled pupils to both practise washing-up skills and learn how to sequence the various parts of the activity.
- Consistent, clear explanation and modelling by teachers and other classroom staff illustrate the high expectations they have of pupils and ensure that pupils understand their learning and how to improve their work. As a result, pupils hone their skills and develop their understanding. Pupils in a mathematics lesson, for example, rapidly developed their skills in using algebra to prove Pythagoras' theorem.
- Teachers are adept at improving pupils' reading and communication skills rapidly. Pupils develop good reading skills from their starting points and use a range of phonics and other skills, including assistive communication aids, to read with increasing accuracy and comprehension. This increases pupils' access to the wider curriculum and they read with pleasure.
- The shared enthusiasm for learning between pupils, teachers, therapists and other adults working with pupils contributes to pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and contributes to the substantial progress they make over time. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy the challenge of learning new things and of developing their skills and knowledge. Pupils are enthusiastic and joyful learners as a consequence and look forward to the next steps in their education and training with justified confidence.
- Parents speak very highly of the school's impact on their children's learning. They receive detailed reports on pupils' learning and progress and how well they are doing.
- The success that staff have in creating a lively, joyful and successful learning experience is reflected in pupils' respect for others' learning and social needs. As a result, staff rarely have to intervene to correct behaviour. When they need to do so, pupils respond immediately.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils, including those in the early years and the sixth form, respond extremely positively to the high quality of teaching and care provided for them. As a result, they grow in self-confidence and become self-assured learners. They apply themselves to their learning, show determination to do their best and, as a consequence, their positive, 'can-do' attitude makes a major contribution to their progress.
- Pupils' learning about people from other cultures and backgrounds and about others' beliefs and lifestyles is developed well through a wide-ranging PSHE programme. Pupils are curious about and respectful of others. They understand and can discuss and celebrate differences and similarities between people with increasing maturity as they grow in understanding. Together with their learning about how public services support society and how the country is governed, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form build on the basics of work-related skills first met in the early years. They benefit from well-judged independent careers advice and guidance so that they can make important choices for their future. Staff tailor support and guidance to their needs sensitively and skilfully.
- The carefully planned integrated learning plans for individual pupils successfully enable pupils to develop the skills and understanding to keep themselves healthy, both emotionally and physically. Staff take care to develop pupils' understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils understand how important physical activity is and appropriate, well-targeted therapies support them very effectively. Other therapies and interventions promote the development of pupils' social and communication skills very well. As a consequence, pupils rapidly develop the skills they need to interact with each other and adults. Parents say that the work of the school has changed their family lives for the better.
- The school's work to safeguard pupils focuses effectively on enabling pupils to develop an excellent understanding of how to keep safe online and how to use mobile technology safely, and is appropriate to their stage of development. Pupils can discuss how to use social networking sites, such as Facebook, knowledgeably. As a consequence, pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are confident they will receive support if they need it.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils show high levels of self-awareness and awareness, too, of the needs of others, whom they treat with respect at all times. Pupils show the same respect for others in lessons as they do in their social interactions. As a result, they have a well-defined sense of right and wrong, know the harm that bullying, including online bullying, can cause and play their full part in ensuring that it does not occur. Pupils' conduct is impeccable.

- Pupils' sensitivity to the needs of others means that they conduct themselves extremely well throughout the day. They manage themselves confidently.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour is supported by skilful staff who help pupils develop the ability to manage themselves. As a result, pupils enjoy their time in school and attend very well. Attendance is actively supported by all members of staff and, as a result, unauthorised absences are very low.
- Instances of poor behaviour are rare. Staff take steps quickly, when required, to moderate pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively. On rare occasions, the school has recourse to using exclusion, almost always for a short period of time, before reintegrating pupils to enjoy the full life of the school again.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Including in the sixth form and in the early years, pupils make sustained and substantial progress over time from their varied starting points. Across a wide range of subjects and areas of learning, pupils develop incrementally their knowledge, skills and understanding that lead them to the next stages of development.
- The carefully designed curriculum and high-quality teaching, which take into account the special educational needs and/or disabilities of each individual, promote rapid progress. Plans provide for personalised learning that ensures that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make the same excellent levels of progress. Pupils' learning goes from strength to strength as a result.
- At all stages, pupils are encouraged to think hard about their learning and they show remarkable ability to reflect on their achievements and consider how to move forward.
- Pupils develop their reading skills very well and this supports their learning across the curriculum. They use a wide range of communication skills to discuss their learning, including phonics skills in reading, and to get the best out of their lessons and wider learning experiences. The strong development of effective reading skills supports pupils' rapid progress in English.
- Pupils respond very positively to the stimulating mathematical challenges they are set at appropriate levels. They use a range of methods, from practical equipment to algebra to relating their learning to real-life problems, to develop their skills and cement their understanding of key concepts. As a consequence, pupils' progress in mathematics is rapid, considering their different starting points.
- Carefully targeted interventions for pupils eligible for support through the catch-up premium make a substantial contribution to accelerating pupils' progress in English and mathematics, so that it matches that of other pupils in the school after a period of time.
- Most-able pupils in the school benefit from the same precise planning that promotes excellent progress for other groups of pupils. The wide range of qualifications at different levels means that pupils, including the most able in the sixth form, have stretching goals for achievement. This motivates them and helps them achieve very well. In other key stages and in the early years, teachers' highly developed skills in using assessment to plan learning ensure that most-able pupils have stimulating and

challenging tasks that bring about sustained and substantial progress.

- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their personal journey in successful learning and progress as they leave each key stage and enter the next.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have a detailed understanding of children's starting points in the Reception class. They set small, incremental steps for success that inform the work of teachers and other staff accurately. As a consequence, children quickly settle to their daily routines and develop social skills to learn and explore their surroundings in the well-resourced provision. Children make excellent progress from starting points that are well below those typical for their age.
- Teachers and other staff are skilled in providing stimulating learning experiences that stretch and challenge children's learning. Teachers ask well-considered questions that prompt children to think for themselves, engage their imaginations and begin to develop their language, communication and fine motor skills at appropriate levels. As a result, children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, thrive and develop self-confidence and social skills that support their excellent progress.
- Welfare and safeguarding arrangements are effective and are complemented by very positive relationships with parents. As a consequence, leaders shape learning that best meets the learning, personal and medical needs of each individual child. Arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Staff are highly effective in helping children develop the skills they need to interact with each other, increasingly take care of their own needs and show consideration for each other.
- High-quality teaching generates a strong sense of fun in learning and children blossom as they discover new and interesting things in the outside learning spaces and in teacher-led activities. Careful recording of children's achievements ensures that staff keep a close eye of each pupil's development. As a result, refined planning, including a range of integrated therapeutic interventions, ensures that learning progresses apace and progress is rapid. As a consequence of the high levels of care and highly effective learning, children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Effective leadership ensures that students continue to develop their personal skills and excel in their studies throughout their time in the sixth form.
- Leaders ensure that the same rigorous arrangements to keep pupils safe and safeguard them apply in the sixth form. Staff are well trained and vigilant and know how to respond if they have a concern about a student's well-being or safety.
- Leaders ensure that students' well-being and progress are monitored carefully. This is used wisely and accurately to provide additional support and challenge. As a result, students make extremely positive progress from their starting points, including those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The curriculum is interesting and exciting, with a wide variety of options that meet

students' interests, from horticulture to travel and tourism and sports leadership. Learning in mathematics, English and PSHE form the basis of students' learning to ensure that they continue to develop key skills for life and the next steps in their education and training.

- Teachers have high expectations of students' learning and achievement. Stretching targets enable pupils to deepen their understanding and move their learning forward. Whenever possible, students attempt the next levels in examination qualifications. Leaders' use of unit awards to bridge the gap between examination qualification levels is highly effective. As a result, students continue to make excellent progress and are highly motivated and committed to their learning. Students are prepared well for further study, training or employment.
- Carefully planned learning pathways and advice on options ensure that students are motivated. Similarly, personalised independent career advice and guidance provide added zest to students' enthusiasm for learning. Students look forward to their future training and studies. Such motivation contributes to the very high retention and course completion rates. In 2016, all students left the school with a secure place of further study or training.
- Students behave impeccably in lessons and around the school. They act as extremely positive role models for younger pupils. Students' wider experiences, supported by effective work-related placements, help them mature, so that can play their unofficial role as ambassadors with confidence. Students are respectful of each other and use their increasingly effective social and communication skills to engage with others. As a result, they can explore their curiosity about other people, their backgrounds and lifestyles. They are keen to learn about differences and celebrate them. As a consequence, along with their practical life-skills learning, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

School details

Unique reference number	122382
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10023787

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Chrisp
Headteacher	Kevin Burdis
Telephone number	01670 823 182
Website	www.cleaswellhill.northumberland.sch.uk
Email address	admin@cleaswellhill.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2011

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Cleaswell Hill School provides education for pupils aged four to 18. All pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from Northumberland and from other neighbouring local authorities.
- The school caters for an increasingly complex range of learning needs, including autistic spectrum disorder, speech and language difficulties and social, emotional and

mental health difficulties. A small proportion of pupils have additional physical disabilities.

- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has taken up post.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school is supported by a school improvement partner appointed by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with pupils of different ages, informally and in groups, to gather their views. Inspectors spoke with a small number of parents and considered parents' views given in Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also took into consideration the views of staff.
- Inspectors observed teaching in lessons and the interactions between staff and pupils before school and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also observed and considered the impact of a range of therapeutic interventions.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the records of pupils' progress and development, and considered these in the light of pupils' work seen in a wide sample of pupils' books.
- Inspectors considered the school's own records of monitoring and evaluation of its performance and its plans for continual improvement to meet pupils' current and future needs.

Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Zoe Westley	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wardle	Ofsted Inspector

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