

New Woodlands School

49 Shroffold Road, Downham, Bromley, Kent BR1 5PD

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Governors have not held senior leaders to account. There has been a lack of ambition and challenge to senior leaders about pupils' outcomes. As a result, the quality of education has declined since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff follow policies routinely. This includes policies on how to manage pupils' behaviour and assess pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are not skilled enough in leading improvement. They have inconsistent approaches to delivering the curriculum.
- Leaders have not managed teachers' performance effectively. Until recently, leaders have not held teachers to account for the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress.
- Pupils' progress varies across different subjects and year groups. For some pupils, their progress weakens due to low attendance.
- Teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations of their pupils. Teachers do not use the information they have about pupils to routinely challenge them in their learning.
- Teachers do not sufficiently support pupils in writing confidently, including pupils' accurate use of spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- The curriculum does not include enough teaching time for humanities and science, particularly at key stage 1. Pupils do not learn these subjects in enough depth.
- Leaders have not secured sufficient accuracy in measuring pupils' progress. Consequently, they cannot be confident in some of the assessment information, for example in science.
- Some pupils' behaviour is boisterous when they move from one lesson to the next. Exclusions, although falling, have been too high.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff know pupils exceptionally well. Leaders do everything they can to help manage pupils' emotional and physical well-being. Pupils are well cared for. They feel safe in school.
- Strong teaching is securing strong progress in some subjects, for example, in art, phonics and mathematics. Most-able pupils are making improved progress in English and mathematics.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are taking appropriate action to address the decline in standards.
- The school provides a wide range of support for pupils and their families. Staff prepare pupils well for the next steps in their education, including transition to other schools.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the governing body holds senior leaders to account and has higher expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - leaders strengthen the curriculum so that pupils have sufficient teaching time, particularly at key stage 1, to secure deeper knowledge, skills and understanding in a wider range of subjects, including science, history and geography
 - senior leaders provide middle leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to improve the quality of teaching within their areas of responsibility
 - leaders sharpen the school's assessment processes so they have accurate information upon which to judge the quality of teaching over time
 - the system for setting targets and managing staff performance is more rigorous and linked to whole-school priorities, particularly in relation to pupils' progress
 - all staff consistently apply school policies, particularly in relation to assessment and behaviour management.
- Improve outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - have higher expectations of their pupils and the quality of work that they should be producing
 - use the information they have about pupils to provide learning activities that challenge and engage pupils, including the most able, in their learning
 - help pupils to improve their writing skills across the curriculum, including the accurate use of spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce the proportions of fixed-term exclusions.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- While there are strengths in teaching, leaders have not ensured that teaching is consistently good across the school and that staff consistently apply school policies. As a result, the quality of teaching and how well staff deal with pupils' behaviour varies.
- The curriculum is not strong enough in helping pupils to develop deep knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, at key stage 1, the teaching time for science, history and geography is not enough. This is limiting the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders have not managed teachers' performance well. Targets are not ambitious enough and they do not link well to whole-school priorities. Leaders have not held staff to account for the quality of their work with enough rigour. This is a reason why teaching has declined since the last inspection. Expectations have been too low.
- Middle leaders are not sufficiently skilled in leading and managing their own areas of responsibility. Middle leaders approach curriculum planning inconsistently. Schemes of work do not help teachers structure learning in relation to pupils' different abilities.
- The school is undergoing a lot of change. Leaders are developing new systems, for example in assessment, as well as implementing a new staffing structure. There are some differences in how staff view the changes leaders are making. Some staff told inspectors that they support the changes. Other staff remain unconvinced.
- Senior leaders have clearly identified that the standard of education has declined. Senior leaders have captured the right actions to improve teaching and outcomes in the school improvement plan. Leaders have demonstrated that they have the capacity to move the school forward.
- Leaders prepare detailed plans for pupils who receive funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities, including about how the funding is spent. As a result of leaders using additional funding effectively, pupils have access to the support they need, particularly in making progress with their social, emotional and communication needs.
- Leaders receive some pupil premium funding. Leaders spend this on appropriate priorities. For example, the money spent on resources in mathematics is diminishing differences between the progress made by pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not. Leaders also effectively manage the smaller amount of physical education and sports premium funding received. It has increased pupils' access to a wider range of sporting experiences including swimming, orienteering and rock climbing. The school does not receive any additional Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Leaders have put in place a beneficial training programme for staff. Staff who spoke to inspectors felt this was raising standards and improving teaching. Inspectors agree. There are no teachers new to the profession currently employed at the school.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of age-appropriate ways to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. This includes through access to a suitable range of extra-curricular activities where they can practise their teamwork skills such as when they are at the cooking club. Pupils learn about taking responsibility for their

actions from a young age. They also learn to practise tolerance and respect, whether that be about a person's race, belief or sexual orientation. Leaders are effectively preparing pupils, not only for the next steps in their education but also for life in modern Britain.

- The local authority has recently put in place effective support for the school. Leaders have valued this. They are not over-reliant on the support but the consultancy provided has helped leaders develop strategies needed to implement the school improvement plan. The local authority is committed to continuing to provide support for the school.

Governance of the school

- Previously, governors have been too accepting of information given to them by school leaders. They have not challenged school leaders on the quality of education being provided or analysed the progress of pupils in sufficient detail. Therefore, governors have not had a sufficient understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not held leaders to account with enough rigour.
- The governing body has recently been reorganised including a decision to use sub-committees to add more rigour to their scrutiny of the school's work. New governors have also been appointed. Their appointment adds much-needed skills and knowledge, including of those governors who have a background in education. The new governing body is now more aware of the quality of education at the school. They have begun to visit the school to meet staff and see the school in action.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school community has established a culture where safeguarding is at the heart of the school's work. It is striking how well staff know pupils. Staff deal with any welfare concerns quickly and effectively. Leaders never give up on following up concerns. Leaders ensure that support, including therapeutic support, for pupils' well-being, whether that be emotional or physical, is actioned quickly. The quality of record-keeping is first rate. School leaders from two mainstream schools emphasised how well staff liaise with them around pupils' attendance and welfare.
- The quality of staff training, including on any use of restraint, is comprehensive and regular. Staff are confident in managing pupils' day-to-day welfare and in being able to spot any worries or concerns. Leaders have a wide range of safeguarding expertise.
- Leaders deliver a safeguarding curriculum that is age-appropriate for pupils and reflects the risks they face in their everyday lives, including when online. For example, key stage 3 pupils learn about female genital mutilation, sexting and gang affiliation. Pupils feel safe at the school. Staff agree that pupils are safe at the school. There were no replies to Parent View, Ofsted's survey for parents and carers. The school regularly surveys parents to gather their views, particularly about how safe their child is. In a recent survey, where the majority of parents responded, almost all parents said their children are safe at the school. They believe that their child is well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the pupils in their classes are capable of. This is shown by the activities given to pupils. Teaching does not sufficiently deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers do not use the information they have about pupils well enough. Teachers give work to pupils that lacks challenge. Learning activities are not well suited to pupils' different abilities, including in some subjects, for the most able pupils.
- Leaders have not ensured that the assessment of pupils' learning is accurate in some subjects. While assessment in English and mathematics is typically secure, there is variability in other subjects.
- Teaching does not help pupils develop their writing skills effectively. Teachers do not use strategies to help pupils be successful as they begin to apply themselves to their written work. Teachers are not routinely helping pupils to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills.
- Teachers build positive relationships with pupils. This helps break down learning barriers for some pupils, helping them to settle down to their work quickly. Teachers are becoming better at using strategies to help calm down any situations where pupils become unsettled. Additional adults are active partners in the classroom. They help pupils learn and behave.
- Teaching develops pupils' reading skills well. Pupils were listened to reading, both during subject lessons and in phonics teaching. Pupils take care to read their work, using their phonics skills to help them sound out words.
- There is some effective teaching in the school. Pupils' work, for example, in mathematics, key stage 1 and 2 English, the nurture group and in art show that pupils are making stronger progress. This includes for the most able in English and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are not taking enough responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. Some pupils also show this in their weaker attitudes towards learning. Some pupils are slow to settle to their work. This means they do not make as much progress as they should.
- Leaders work with a range of external agencies to help pupils stay safe. This includes local community groups. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. Boys and girls who spoke to an inspector were able to explain how to use new technology safely.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of the different types of bullying. Pupils said that although bullying is rare, when it happens staff deal with it well. Almost all parents who replied to the school's survey stated that bullying was rare and dealt with effectively.

- Leaders have put in place several successful ways for pupils to learn about careers. A recent key stage 3 employability experience allowed pupils to interact with business people and careers officers. Leaders surveyed pupils' views before and after the event. The survey showed that pupils learned a great deal about jobs. The event also increased pupils' confidence in talking to other people. An inspector also spoke to some Year 9 pupils who commented on how useful the event was. They could explain what they wanted to do for their future careers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has been too high. Leaders have decided to shift the focus away from sanctions to rewards. Leaders also decided to focus on training staff in methods that prevent behaviour issues from becoming more serious. Pupils are also learning how to resolve their differences and how to better manage their own behaviour. As a result, the proportion of fixed-term exclusions is falling quickly.
- Overall attendance has fallen slightly. However, for some groups of pupils such as those eligible for free school meals, it has improved. Similarly, the rate of persistent absence has fallen sharply, including for girls. Leaders have put in place effective systems to improve attendance, including using legal routes. Inspectors reviewed case studies that showed how the attendance for individual pupils has improved.
- Pupils' behaviour as they move between lessons can be boisterous. Some pupils do not take responsibility for moving along corridors quickly and calmly. Staff actively supervise areas both inside and outside the school. Adults quickly support pupils when needed.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons varies. Behaviour worsens when teaching is not challenging and engaging pupils in their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' writing skills are not good overall. Pupils, taking into account their learning needs and starting points, are not as secure as they should be in writing confidently and accurately. This is because teachers do not actively use effective strategies that promote better writing.
- Inspectors' reviews of education, health and care plans show that staff are supporting pupils in improving their independence, communication and social skills. Pupils' progress in subject skills varies; some make better progress in their literacy and numeracy than others.
- Leaders' effective use of pupil premium funding has helped to diminish differences between the progress and attainment made by pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not, particularly in mathematics and reading. There are some differences emerging in pupils' writing outcomes.
- Although pupils' progress is stronger by the end of key stage 1 and 2 than it is at key stage 3 in English and mathematics, progress in art is consistently strong. Progress in humanities and science varies. Reviews of pupils' work show that pupils are not

developing deep enough knowledge, skills and understanding at key stage 3.

- The most able pupils, including the most able pupils who are eligible for free school meals, are making stronger progress in English and mathematics. Reviewing pupils' work during the inspection showed that pupils apply themselves well. They produce high-quality work. For example, this can be seen in letter writing in English or working with more complicated concepts successfully in mathematics. The use of one-to-one intervention for the most able helps them deepen their understanding. However, in everyday teaching, particularly outside of English and mathematics, teachers are not sufficiently challenging the most able pupils to learn more deeply.
- Leaders recently decided to create a small nurture group with its own curriculum. Inspection evidence shows that this group has settled well. Leaders ensured that they established accurate baselines of pupils' starting points. They are making strong progress, for example in learning to manage their behaviour and improve their communication and social skills.
- The school offers a range of accredited courses for pupils at key stage 3. This includes first-aid training and employability skills. These courses help pupils learn a variety of important skills to help them prepare for key stage 4.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading skills well. Pupils have regular opportunities to read during lessons. Also, pupils' attainment in phonics, including those pupils eligible for free school meals, by the end of Year 2 is in line with the national average.
- The school's 'outreach' team helps pupils prepare for their return to mainstream schools. Information shows this is increasingly successful in ensuring that pupils move to mainstream and stay in their new school. This includes providing ongoing mentoring support. Leaders support Year 9 pupils in preparation for their next steps into key stage 4. Pupils spoken to by inspectors and a review of tracking information show how seriously leaders take this in helping Year 9 pupils to be confident about the transition process.

School details

Unique reference number	100763
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10031867

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Holland
Headteacher	Carlie Warner
Telephone number	020 8314 9911
Website	www.newwoodlands.lewisham.sch.uk
Email address	admin@newwoodlands.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a special school that caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental-health needs from key stage 1 through to key stage 3.
- The school works with a range of local authorities in offering short- and long-term placements for pupils referred to the school. It also has a group of pupils who are solely registered on the school's roll.
- The school undertakes 'outreach' work funded by the local authority. As part of the 'outreach' work there is a team of teachers and mentors. They work with pupils and mainstream schools to support pupils in their transition to and from New Woodlands.
- Almost all pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is rising quickly.

- The proportion of pupils at the school in receipt of free school meals is well above the national average. However, the school receives funding only when an eligible pupil is on the school roll.
- Most pupils are from a Black Caribbean or Black African ethnic background. There are no pupils currently who speak English as an additional language.
- There are no pupils attending alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited lessons in a range of subjects and year groups. Leaders accompanied inspectors to some of the lessons visited. During these visits, inspectors also looked at pupils' learning over time. The lead inspector also evaluated one-to-one intervention sessions. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of books in a number of subjects across all key stages.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior and middle leaders to evaluate the impact of their work. The lead inspector held separate meetings with governors, the local authority and representatives from the advisory board. An inspector also had a telephone call with the local authority designated officer. The lead inspector also met with a headteacher and staff member from a mainstream school who wanted to talk about the school's work. Inspectors also considered email communication from a leader in another school outlining their views about the school's transition work.
- There were no replies to Parent View or the pupil survey. The inspection team reviewed staff questionnaires handed to inspectors during both days of the inspection. Inspectors also met with several staff who wanted to share their views about the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation provided by leaders, including: internal assessment information for pupils in all year groups; leaders' self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; minutes of governing body meetings; attendance and behaviour information; case studies; a variety of school policies; the single central record of recruitment checks; surveys of parent views carried out by the school; evidence of SMSC across the school and a wide range of other information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector

Gary Pocock

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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