

Caroline Chisholm School

Wooldale Centre for Learning, Wootton Fields, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN4 6TP

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 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 |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not taken appropriate action to maintain the high standards identified at the last inspection.
- For too long, leaders' view of the quality of the school's provision has been too generous.
- Pupils make average progress across a range of subjects in key stage 4, and in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2.
- The most able pupils in key stages 2, 3 and 4 do not make as much progress as they should.
- The quality of teaching is not of a high enough level across the school to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Checks on pupils' achievement lack sufficient precision to allow leaders to identify quickly when pupils do not make good progress.
- Pupils do not fully engage in their learning when they receive work that lacks challenge.
- While attendance for all pupils is in line with national levels, this is not the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Students in the sixth form make average progress in academic and work-related subjects because teaching is not consistently good.
- Leaders across the separate provisions do not work closely enough to share best practice.
- Leaders' oversight of how they use additional government funding is not sharp enough.
- The information that parents of pupils in key stage 3 receive about their child's achievement does not help them to understand the progress that their child is making.
- Governors have not challenged senior leaders well enough to ensure that teaching is good and that pupils make consistently strong progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils in Year 11 in 2017 made progress in mathematics that was well above average.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school site.
- Pupils in key stage 1 attain highly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Strong leadership and high-quality teaching in the early years help children to make excellent progress and prepare well for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - senior and subject leaders' work to check on the quality of teaching secures consistently good classroom practice across all areas of the school, particularly in the secondary phase
 - the system for checking primary and secondary pupils' and sixth form students' progress is sharp enough to identify quickly when pupils or students are not making at least good progress
 - leaders develop a sharp oversight of their use of additional government funding, particularly the pupil premium and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium
 - leaders across all phases work more closely together to share best practice
 - the reports that parents of pupils in key stage 3 receive provide precise information about the progress that their child is making
 - governors continue to develop their knowledge and skills within their leadership role, so that they consistently hold senior leaders to account for the use of additional government funding, the quality of teaching, and pupils' achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching to raise further pupils' achievement, particularly that of the disadvantaged pupils and the most able, by making sure that all teachers:
 - use information about pupils' prior learning and attainment to set suitably challenging work that secures good progress
 - plan activities that enable pupils to engage fully in their learning
 - have high expectations of the quantity of work that pupils, particularly the most able, can complete.
- Reduce the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are absent from school, so that their attendance is in line with the national level for all pupils.
- Ensure that teaching in the sixth form is consistently good across the whole provision, to allow students to make consistently good progress in both academic and work-related qualifications.

An external review of the school governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors have not maintained or built on the high standards that inspectors identified at the last inspection.
- For some time, leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's provision has been too generous. This is because they have focused on pupils' attainment, which has been high, rather than on the progress that pupils make, which has been average.
- Leaders have not had a sufficiently sharp oversight of their use of additional government funding, including the pupil premium and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium. Until very recently, leaders have not been able to tell how well the support that they provide to eligible pupils through this funding has helped these pupils to make better progress.
- The information that leaders provide about key stage 3 pupils' achievement does not help parents to understand how much progress their child is making.
- Leaders across the different phases of the school's provision do not work closely together to share best practice. As a result, leaders are too slow to adopt the strategies that are successful in one phase, particularly the primary phase, across all phases.
- Since joining the school, the principal has ensured that all leaders have a more accurate view of the quality of the school's provision. He and his leaders have taken appropriate action to resolve those areas where performance is not strong enough. These actions have yet to secure good progress for all groups of pupils, including the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils, across all phases of the school.
- A key development that the principal has brought about is to ensure that all leaders and teachers focus on pupils' progress rather than their attainment when checking on pupils' achievement. While this has enabled some groups of pupils, including the low-prior-attaining pupils, to make consistently strong progress, this is not the case for all groups. The most able, who make up the majority of each year group, do not make as much progress as they should.
- While improving, leaders' checks on pupils' progress lack the necessary precision to identify quickly when pupils are not making good progress. Because of this, leaders are not able to ensure that pupils receive timely support to increase their rate of progress.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders now undertake joint checks on lessons to monitor the quality of teaching. These checks have yet to secure consistently good teaching across the whole school.
- Leaders have reviewed the system by which they manage teachers' performance and provide training. These changes have not yet improved the quality of teaching to a level that ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- The broad and balanced curriculum provides pupils across all phases with the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects. In the primary phase, pupils receive effective opportunities, for example, to develop their creative skills. Leaders have adapted the key stage 4 curriculum to meet all pupils' needs. This includes ensuring that the most able pupils can study more

challenging academic subjects, including biology, chemistry and physics.

- Wide-ranging extra-curricular activities enable pupils to develop their understanding and skills beyond the classroom. Educational trips off-site, including foreign exchange trips and charity-based visits to Malawi and Uganda, widen pupils' experiences beyond the local area. Sports, arts and drama activities allow pupils to explore their creative and sporting interests, and to grow in confidence.
- There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to become secure in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about a range of religious beliefs through their learning about different religious festivals. The primary phase's parliament and the secondary phase's school council teach pupils about the democratic process. The cross-phase assemblies help pupils from all year groups to learn about the whole school community, and about the need to respect all people.
- The leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has ensured that adults who support these pupils work closely with teachers to plan the pupils' learning. As a result, higher proportions of these pupils, including those who are in the school's resource-based provision, now make at least average progress.
- Leaders in the primary phase use the sports premium very well to engage pupils in sporting activities. Activities such as dance, hockey and indoor athletics have seen a sharp rise in the number of primary pupils who engage in sport.
- The school engages well with other organisations to develop the provision that the pupils receive. The primary phase works well with four other schools, particularly to verify teachers' assessment of pupils' learning in the early years and in key stage 1. The school also works with a local teaching school. This provides leaders at all levels with the opportunity to learn from the practice of others.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, governors have not taken appropriate action to ensure that the school has maintained the quality of its provision.
- Governors do not have a secure enough oversight of the effectiveness with which senior leaders use additional government funding, including the pupil premium. While there has been an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium, governors have not ensured that leaders implement the recommendations from this review.
- More recently, governors have taken action to develop a more secure understanding of the quality of the school's provision. They have created a standards committee that solely focuses on considering pupils' achievement. Individual governors are also linked to subject areas, to check on the quality of the provision of these subjects.
- Through these actions, governors are now asking more challenging questions of senior and subject leaders. This is particularly the case when they identify provision that is not consistently strong. However, this challenge has yet to ensure that all pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress.
- Governors fully understand the actions that they must take when they have a safeguarding concern. This includes the actions that they must take if they have a concern about an adult's actions towards a pupil.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Members of the safeguarding team take prompt action when they have a concern about a pupil's well-being. They work closely with parents and with external agencies to ensure that the pupil receives the support that they need.
- The school employs a counsellor, who provides close support to pupils who require it.
- The safeguarding team members meet regularly to review the actions that they have taken to support pupils about whose welfare they have concerns. The team also maintains detailed central records of any safeguarding concerns that it has. As a result, all team members are aware of any ongoing welfare concerns, and the actions that leaders have taken to resolve them.
- Safeguarding leaders are aware of issues in the local community that may affect their pupils' welfare. They are quick to provide support when such issues affect their pupils.
- All staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know the signs of abuse to look out for. They know what they must do when they have a welfare concern about a pupil.
- Pupils say that they are safe at the school. They say that there are adults with whom they can speak if they have a concern. They are confident that staff will take effective action to help them to resolve their concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school's primary and secondary phases to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- While teachers have secure subject knowledge, not all use this well enough to plan activities that enable pupils to engage fully in their learning. When this is the case, the progress that pupils make slows.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve. They do not use information about pupils' prior learning well enough to plan activities that are sufficiently challenging. As a result, not all groups of pupils make good progress, particularly the most able.
- Teachers in the primary phase plan lessons that enable pupils to engage well in their learning. This allows pupils to make strong progress in key stage 1. The teaching in key stage 2 has yet to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress.
- Teachers in the primary phase work well to encourage pupils to read. The displays within the primary area promote a love of reading. All primary pupils complete reading journals to encourage them to read widely. This drive to promote reading is not as strong in the secondary phase.
- Adults who support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities work well with teachers to ensure that the pupils receive effective support. As a result, these pupils now make at least average progress in both primary and secondary phases.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers plan tasks that engage pupils well in their learning, and enable them to become secure in their understanding. Teachers have

high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, and communicate these expectations well to their pupils. They use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding, and provide further support where this is not secure.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to learn how to be safe, including when out in the local community, and when online. Pupils learn about the dangers of sexting, and what to do if they become the victim of inappropriate messages online.
- Through their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils learn about how to live healthy lives. Pupils learn about the importance of making healthy choices. Appropriate to their age, pupils across all phases learn about the risks of making choices that may put their health or well-being at risk.
- Pupils learn to respect everyone, including those who hold opinions and beliefs that are different from theirs.
- There are increasing opportunities for older pupils to work with primary pupils, including in sporting events and in completing artwork. Through this, the older pupils develop their leadership skills.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber, racial and homophobic bullying. Pupils say that there are few occasions of bullying at the school, and that, when these do occur, staff deal with them quickly and effectively. The school's records confirm this to be the case.
- From Year 8, pupils receive independent careers advice and guidance. This enables them to learn about the different career opportunities that are available to them.
- Leaders closely monitor the attendance and welfare of any pupils who attend the alternative provision of which the school makes use. School leaders visit this alternative provision to check on the quality of the provision and care that these pupils receive.
- The designated teacher who supports pupils who are in the care of the local authority works closely with these pupils to ensure that they receive the support that they need.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to do well. However, in setting work that does not challenge pupils well enough, teachers do not help pupils to turn these positive attitudes into consistently good progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- While the overall attendance of all pupils is in line with national levels, this is not the case for disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are absent from school remains high, particularly in the secondary phase. Such levels of absence interrupt these pupils' learning, and prevent them from making good progress.

- Pupils conduct themselves well between lessons and during social times.
- Pupils from the primary and secondary phases mix well with each other during the lunch break, which they share together.
- Pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour receive close support from staff. This support helps these pupils to manage their behaviour more effectively.
- Occasions when pupils are excluded from school because of their behaviour are low.
- The principal has successfully reduced the proportion of pupils who are late to school. Almost all pupils arrive at school promptly at the beginning of the school day.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In key stages 2, 3 and 4, pupils do not make consistently strong progress across a range of subjects. This is particularly the case for the most able who do not make as much progress as they should. This group of pupils make up more than half of the cohort in most year groups.
- In 2016 and 2017, Year 11 pupils made average progress in a wide range of GCSE subjects, including in English and science.
- The school's performance information for current Year 11 pupils and the books that inspectors looked at indicate that, in many subjects, most-able pupils make less progress than their middle-prior-attaining peers. In English, mathematics, geography, science and computing, while most-able pupils' progress is variable, middle-prior-attaining pupils' progress is strong.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4 made progress that was well below average. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made average progress. Current disadvantaged pupils in key stages 3 and 4 continue to make average progress.
- The proportion of pupils in key stage 3 who achieve a level of attainment in their knowledge, skills and understanding that is appropriate to their age is high. This is particularly the case for pupils in Year 8, in English, mathematics and science.
- However, the proportion of most-able key stage 3 pupils who attain the higher levels in the skills against which teachers assess them is too low. Consequently, these pupils are making only average progress in their key stage 3 studies.
- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics in key stage 2 in 2017 was broadly average. The proportion of the most-able pupils who attained the greater depth in reading was below the national average for the second year running.
- While attainment of current key stage 2 pupils in English and mathematics is high, progress is average. Most-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- The progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make is improving. This is due to the closer guidance that these pupils now receive from the adults who support them. These pupils, including those who are in the resource-based provision, make at least average progress.
- The progress that pupils made in GCSE mathematics in 2017 was well above average.
- The small number of low-prior-attaining pupils in Year 11 in 2017 made good progress

in their GCSEs. This was because this group of pupils received sufficiently challenging work and close support from their teachers. Current low-prior-attaining pupils continue to make strong progress in their studies, particularly in key stage 4.

- Pupils attain highly in key stage 1. This is because the teachers build well on the strong preparation that many pupils have received in their early years provision. This is especially the case for those pupils whose early years provision was at the school.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the national standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 in 2017 was well above average. This has been the case for the past four years. This is due to the close support that pupils receive to become secure in their reading.
- Almost all pupils who left Year 11 in 2017 moved on to sustained next steps in further education, or work with training.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership of the early years is very strong, and plays a crucial role in ensuring the very high quality of the early years provision.
- The leader of the early years ensures that the quality of the provision is such that children can make excellent progress in their learning. The leader's view of the quality of the early years provision is accurate.
- Adults in the early years provision carefully plan learning activities that enable children to develop their skills and understanding fully. Adults ask questions to check children's learning, and are quick to adapt activities that enable children to make rapid progress.
- Children attain very highly across all areas of their learning. From often below-average starting points, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of Reception Year is well above the national average.
- Because of this, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The leader of the early years ensures that children's transition into the provision is smooth. This allows adults to have a clear understanding of children's prior learning, and to support children in settling into the early years provision quickly.
- Adults in the early years maintain close relationships with the children's parents and ensure that parents are thoroughly involved in their children's learning. Because of this, parents have a clear understanding of the progress that their child is making.
- Staff in the early years provision work closely with other providers to check the accuracy of their assessment of children's learning. They do this when the children enter the early years provision and before they move on to Year 1.
- Children behave very well. This is due to the strong relationships that children have with the adults, and with each other. Children engage well in their learning, moving between activities with purpose. They respond quickly to instructions from adults.
- Children receive a wide variety of opportunities to develop their understanding of different cultures and beliefs.
- All adults who work in the early years understand their safeguarding duties. They receive safeguarding training with the staff from the primary and secondary phases.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is too variable across a range of subjects to ensure that students make good progress.
- Over the past three academic years, the students, including disadvantaged students, have made average progress in their academic and work-related subjects. Current pupils in Year 13 are making average progress.
- The leader of the sixth form has an accurate view of the quality of the provision that students receive. She rightly recognises that teachers are not challenging students enough to ensure that they achieve as highly as they should. However, her work to resolve this has not yet ensured that the quality of teaching allows students to make good progress.
- While improving, the system by which the sixth form leader and subject leaders check on the progress that students make is not sharp enough.
- All students receive the opportunity to complete work experience. However, not all students undertook placements that provided them with an effective insight into the world of work.
- Students who, on entering the sixth form, have not previously achieved GCSE English or mathematics receive close support to enable them to attain these qualifications. Almost all of the students for whom this was the case last academic year were successful in attaining a GCSE in the relevant subject.
- Students receive a wide variety of opportunities to develop their personal, social and employability skills. They are able to take up positions of responsibility within the local community and in the other phases of the school's provision, including supporting younger pupils in their learning. Such opportunities enable the students to grow in confidence and to recognise the importance of respecting all people.
- Almost all Year 12 students continue with their studies into Year 13. This is because, prior to joining the sixth form, students receive close support to ensure that they make appropriate subject choices.
- Students learn how to keep safe, including online, and how to live healthy lifestyles.
- Students receive independent careers advice and guidance that helps them to understand their next steps for when they leave the sixth form. Students learn about university courses and work-based training opportunities, including apprenticeships.
- In 2017, almost all students moved on to appropriate places of higher education, employment or training at the end of Year 13.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137089 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10037602 |

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

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| Type of school | All-through |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1985 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 292 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Linda Browett |
| Principal | David James |
| Telephone number | 01604 669 200 |
| Website | www.ccs.northants.sch.uk |
| Email address | djames@ccs.northants.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 26–27 September 2012 |

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the primary curriculum on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the primary curriculum.
- Caroline Chisholm School is a larger-than-average, all-through school.
- The school became an academy in August 2011.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is smaller than average.

- The number of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. However, the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan is higher than average.
- The school has a resource-based provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. This resource has places for 10 pupils in the secondary phase. These pupils are integrated into the mainstream provision for the majority of their time in school.
- The principal who was in place at the time of the last inspection has since left the school. The current principal took up the post in September 2015.
- The school works with one alternative provider to provide pupils at the school with education at a placement off site. This alternative provision is CE Academy in Northampton.
- In 2017, the school met the government's floor standards for pupils' achievement at the end of key stages 2 and 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 51 lessons across the whole school. Eleven of these observations took place jointly with senior leaders, including the principal. Inspectors also observed registration time and an inspector observed an assembly.
- During their visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books and spoke with pupils.
- An inspector looked at some most-able pupils' books as a separate activity.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings, including with: the principal; senior leaders; leaders responsible for safeguarding; the head of sixth form; the literacy and numeracy leaders; subject leaders; pastoral leaders; the special educational needs coordinator; the designated member of staff for children in the care of the local authority; the personal, social, health and economic education coordinator; and a selection of staff.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body: the chair of governors; the chair of the standards committee; and the safeguarding link governor.
- An inspector listened to primary pupils read.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the alternative provision of which the school makes use.
- An inspector spoke with the local authority's designated officer.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before and after school, between lessons, and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with pupils from across all of the school's phases.
- Inspectors took into account the 353 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 149 responses to the free-text service.
- Inspectors took into account the 112 responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's provision, including: self-evaluation and improvement planning; behaviour and attendance; achievement; the external review of the school's use of the pupil premium; the provision for children in the care of the local authority; governance; and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Rachel Tordoff | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Russell Barr | Ofsted Inspector |
| Rob Cruise | Ofsted Inspector |
| Christine Horrocks | 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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