

North West Kent Alternative Provision Service

189 High Road, Wilmington, Kent DA2 7DP

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Significant concerns regarding pupils' safety and well-being are not followed up or shared appropriately.
- All aspects of the school's work have declined significantly since the last inspection. A large number of interim leadership arrangements have been ineffective.
- Pupils make very limited progress in all subjects, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the most able.
- Weak leadership for a sustained period has led to poor management of staff performance. Too many staff lack basic subject knowledge.
- Teaching is poor. Work is frequently too easy. Teaching assistants do not have enough positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Adults have significantly different approaches to managing pupils' behaviour and inconsistent expectations for pupils' conduct. As a result, pupils' behaviour is very poor.
- Not enough key stage 4 pupils come to school regularly.
- Systems, over time, to measure pupils' progress are inadequate. Current leaders have quickly established a new approach and now have an accurate view of pupils' starting points. The tracking of key stage 3 pupils' re-integration into mainstream school is weak.
- The provision for pupils' personal development, mental health and welfare is poor. Over time, leaders have provided pupils with very little additional support, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has a highly accurate view of the school's weaknesses. She has already had a positive impact on the morale of staff.
- New leaders are having a positive impact on pupils' welfare. The number of pupils on part-time timetables has been drastically reduced. Last year, there were vast numbers of exclusions. This term there is none.
- Effective work by new leaders has had a positive impact on the curriculum. Thoughtful work over the summer has ensured that pupils now study a broad and appropriate curriculum.
- New leaders ensured that almost all pupils who left the school in the summer were in education, employment or training.
- The local authority and the management committee have effectively tackled weak leadership in the last year.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Safeguard pupils by ensuring that:
 - employment references for staff are requested and obtained
 - staff know and understand whom they report concerns about pupils' safety and well-being to
 - all reported concerns are evaluated swiftly and followed-up diligently and all actions and decisions are recorded
 - allegations against members of staff are dealt with in a timely and effective manner
 - effective systems are in place to share information about pupils' well-being across this school's sites and with mainstream schools when pupils return
 - restraint is only used by trained staff and recorded appropriately, in accordance with the school's agreed policies and procedures.
- Improve pupils' progress in all subjects, by ensuring that:
 - planned learning builds on what pupils know and can do
 - staff are ambitious for all pupils, particularly the most able
 - staff have adequate subject knowledge
 - teaching assistants have a clear role in supporting pupils' learning and that they have the basic skills to do this.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - using the newly introduced systems to track the progress of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that it is clear what additional support is working and what is not
 - ensuring that the performance of teachers and teaching assistants is managed effectively
 - developing an effective system to evaluate the quality of key stage 3 interventions
 - analysing accurate behaviour and attendance information in order to bring about improvement.
- Improve the personal development and behaviour of pupils by:
 - devising and consistently implementing an effective behaviour management policy
 - improving the attendance levels of key stage 4 pupils.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The school has had a significant number of interim leadership arrangements since the last inspection. The quality of every aspect of the school's work has declined during this period.
- The management of staff performance has been very weak. Leaders over time have not focused enough on the impact that staff should be having on pupils' progress and attainment.
- Systems to track pupils' progress are poor. New leaders have little or no meaningful information about how well groups of pupils are learning. Leaders are not able to evaluate what difference the extra things they do for disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making. As a result, pupil premium funding is not used as effectively as it could be.
- The local authority did not keep a close enough watch on the school between 2013 and 2016. The introduction of a quality assurance system in 2016 means that the local authority assessment of the school's weaknesses is accurate. Local authority personnel have acted swiftly to remove the ineffective interim leadership arrangements.
- New middle leaders are having a positive impact on teaching, learning and assessment. They have developed and introduced clear assessment processes. As a result, leaders and staff now have an accurate picture of pupils' starting points.
- Leaders have acted quickly to gather their evidence about what the school does not do well. They are fully aware that teaching and learning and behaviour are poor. Plans for further improvement are ambitious and focused on the right things.
- The new headteacher has ensured that pupils now have a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. She has swiftly adapted the curriculum in response to her analysis of what Year 11 pupils achieved last summer and what courses they followed after they left school.
- For example, current Year 11 pupils now have significantly more time to develop their English and mathematics skills because unsuccessful college placements have been terminated. Qualifications that were too easy to obtain and that did not help pupils when they left school have been stopped.
- The new curriculum is beginning to equip pupils better for life in modern Britain. Leaders recognise that pupils in the past have not had sufficient opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in this regard. Staff are positive about the new citizenship curriculum. Pupils are beginning to grapple with complex themes, such as government spending, as part of their work on democracy.
- New leaders have drastically reduced the number of pupils on part-time timetables. Leaders' demonstrable commitment to inclusion ensures that pupils are now in school more often.
- New leaders have put in place a range of additional services and extra-curricular opportunities, such as counselling and safe contact sports, to support pupils' personal development and welfare and to help pupils who need to manage their anger. Staff

and pupils are positive about these opportunities. It is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' social skills.

- Staff welcome the stability, clarity and ambition that the new headteacher brings to the school.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors are now overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work and the positive impact that they see on their children when they are at home.

Governance of the school

- The membership and leadership of the management committee are now stable. As a result, in the last 12 months they have used local authority quality assurance information to challenge and effectively manage leaders' underperformance. Members of the management committee have an accurate view of the school and value the impact that the new headteacher is already having.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Too many systems and processes intended to keep pupils safe are either partly or wholly ineffective.
- The procedures to recruit staff are not robust. Too many staff do not have references, often because they have not been requested.
- Allegations against staff are not managed properly. There are fundamental misunderstandings about who is responsible for what and a marked lack of urgency in referring information appropriately. Staff do not know what to do if, and when, a pupil makes an allegation.
- Systems to share information are very weak. Staff do not systematically share their concerns with the designated safeguarding lead. When significant information regarding pupils' well-being does come to light, it is not clear what, if anything, is done with this. Whole folders full of concerns regarding pupils' safety, including those relating to current pupils, were not seen by the designated safeguarding lead or the headteacher until the inspection. When key stage 3 pupils re-integrate into their mainstream school, none of the recorded information that staff have regarding pupils' safety and well-being is shared.
- Staff members' use of restraint is unsafe. Staff do not always follow the agreed school policy. Training is not always up to date and the recording of restraints is not as accurate or detailed as it should be.
- New leaders have ensured that the arrangements for pupil transport are now safer. As a result, all minibus drivers will have passed the required tests.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Planned learning does not meet the needs of pupils. Work is too easy too often. Almost all pupils told inspectors this. Pupils also repeat this message to staff during lessons. The most able pupils are poorly served by the tasks that they are given, which often results in poor behaviour.
- Too many teachers and teaching assistants lack the appropriate levels of subject knowledge. As a result, misconceptions are introduced and incorrect technical vocabulary is taught. Ineffective interim leadership over time has resulted in limited staff access to professional development opportunities and training.
- Errors in pupils' work are often not addressed. As a result, pupils repeat basic mistakes in their mathematics work and in their use of spelling and grammar in all subjects. Some staff unintentionally introduce spelling mistakes into pupils' work.
- Teaching assistants are not as effective as they should be. Too often, they play no part in supporting pupils' learning.
- Too many tasks are not interesting or challenging. Pupils' frustration is clear and justifiable. Work in pupils' books highlights that the teaching of mathematics over time is weak. Pupils jump from one concept to the next and do not get any opportunity to practise or master what they have been taught.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils do not feel safe in school. They do not trust adults and do not feel that staff listen and respond to their concerns.
- Records show that no racist or homophobic comments are made. The new headteacher is sceptical about the accuracy of these records. Inspectors heard homophobic comments during the inspection that went unchallenged.
- Pupils of all ages and on both sites resent the fact that they have no morning break between their arrival at school and lunchtime.
- The unforeseen delays to building works have resulted in the school having to use the current buildings. Staff, pupils and leaders recognise that these premises are not pleasant to work or learn in. Classrooms are dilapidated, furniture and books are de-faced and there is no space for key stage 3 pupils to eat their lunch, other than in their classrooms. Staff are doing the best they can.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online.
- New leaders have had a positive impact on pupils' safety and well-being. They have quickly eradicated the established practice of using the wrong codes in the attendance registers for pupils on part-time timetables.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Too many parts of or whole lessons are significantly disrupted. Too often, no learning takes place. Some classrooms are unsafe, and sometimes furniture is thrown.
- Adults are not effective in managing pupils' behaviour. Staff are inconsistent in what behaviours they will and will not accept. As a result, during significant episodes of sustained disruption some adults do or say nothing.
- The long-standing range of behaviour policies is ineffective. The new headteacher is currently working with staff to devise a new, more coherent approach to behaviour management. It is not finished and therefore not being used by staff.
- Some staff have very low expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Key stage 4 pupils lose significant lesson time when they return from their lunchbreak. They are wilfully late and very slow to settle, if at all, into their lessons.
- Some pupils in key stage 3 have good attendance. However, a significant proportion of key stage 4 pupils have poor levels of attendance. Leaders are not fully able to analyse and learn from absence information over time because the incorrect codes were used in the attendance registers.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- New leaders do not have meaningful information about the progress that groups of pupils are making in the school or have made in the past. However, new assessment processes are in place. As a result, staff and leaders now have accurate information about pupils' starting points. Middle leaders have ensured that staff judgements are moderated with other local schools.
- Successful re-integration of key stage 3 pupils into mainstream school is one of the key functions of the school. New leaders have rightly identified that systems and processes to track the success of pupils' re-integration into mainstream schools at key stage 3 are inadequate.
- Current key stage 3 pupils have only just joined the school. There is not enough work in their books to evaluate progress.
- Current key stage 4 pupils who were at the school last year make inadequate progress in all subjects, including English, mathematics and science. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able pupils. Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not helping them to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have low levels of basic literacy do not make acceptable progress. They repeat errors and the quality of their writing does not improve.
- Information from local authority monitoring documents shows that standards at the end of key stage 4 declined significantly in July 2016. Pupils made inadequate progress.

- Leaders' analysis of provisional outcomes information for Year 11 pupils who left the school in July 2017 highlights weak progress in all subjects for all groups of pupils. Attainment in mathematics and English appears to have improved on the very low 2016 outcomes.
- Most pupils left school in July 2017 with uncertain destinations and were at risk of not being in education, employment or training. The new headteacher worked swiftly and effectively with the local authority and the pastoral managers to secure appropriate destinations for almost all pupils. In order to prepare current pupils better for life beyond school, new leaders have worked well with local colleges and schools to re-design the vocational curriculum, established a careers advice programme and removed qualifications that are too easy to obtain and that do not help pupils once they leave school.

School details

Unique reference number	137955
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10012635

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	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Natalie Willbourn
Headteacher	Marie Woolston (Head of Service)
Telephone number	01322 228395
Website	www.nwkaps.org
Email address	officerc@nwkaps.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupils' destinations, equalities or SEN on its website.
- The school has changed significantly since the last inspection. The school now provides re-integration support for key stage 3 pupils and permanent places for key stage 4 pupils. There is no longer a primary provision.
- The school is currently operating across two sites, The Rosemary Centre and Northcourt. The move to a new building in Dartford has been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. The school has undergone a significant six-month restructure that finished in June 2017. There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection.
- The new head of service started in September 2017. However, she began visiting the school in the summer term and worked closely with pupils and staff through the

summer holiday. The school has had five interim leaders since the last inspection.

- The majority of pupils are boys.
- Almost half of the pupils receive pupil premium funding.
- Almost all pupils have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning on both school sites, often with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work during lessons and spoke to pupils about their learning. A review of current pupils' books from last year was undertaken with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle leaders, the chair of the management committee and a representative from the local authority. Documents relating to governance were reviewed.
- Parents' views were considered during four telephone conversations. The views of staff were considered through the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and through meetings.
- Pupils' views were heard through talking with pupils on both sites during the two days.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness, improvement plans and leaders' analyses of the quality of teaching. Inspectors also evaluated information relating to pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, case files, restraint logs, concern forms and the central record of recruitment checks on staff.

Inspection team

Mark Cole, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo McSherrie

Ofsted Inspector

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