

Allestree Woodlands School

Blenheim Drive, Allestree, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 2LW

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

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
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

- Until recently, leaders have not acted quickly enough to ensure that outcomes improve rapidly. In 2017, the progress of boys, disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils was weak.
- Students in the sixth form do not make the progress of which they are capable. In 2017, progress was significantly below the national average.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has had the desired impact.
- The school's development plans are not consistently supported by clear and measurable success criteria, so that leaders and governors can evaluate improvement over time.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent between subjects and year groups.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve or how they present their work.
- Teachers do not routinely use information about what pupils already know and can do to set work that is matched to their needs.
- Not all teachers follow the school's policy on providing feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve their work.
- The behaviour of pupils is not consistently good and there is some low-level disruption. The school's policy for managing the behaviour of pupils is not consistently applied by all staff.

The school has the following strengths

- The enhanced provision for pupils with hearing impairment is effective. Pupils feel well supported and resources are deployed effectively to meet pupils' needs.
- The programme for the personal, social, economic and health development of pupils is well planned and effectively delivered.
- The programme for careers education is well planned and informative, so that almost all pupils secure places in education, employment or training by the end of Year 11.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school’s improvement plan contains clear success criteria, so that leaders can monitor the impact of their work and governors are able to hold leaders stringently to account
 - the impact of pupil premium funding is evaluated sharply by leaders and governors, so that they know which actions are having a positive impact on outcomes and attendance and which are not
 - all leaders, including subject leaders, play an effective role in improving pupils’ progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers accurately and consistently use assessment information when planning learning activities, so that they build on what pupils already know and can do
 - teachers consistently have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, so that all pupils are challenged, know how to make good progress and present their work well
 - disadvantaged pupils receive better support in their lessons, so that they can achieve the levels of which they are capable
 - teachers consistently follow the school’s policy on providing helpful feedback that pupils can use to improve their work.
- Improve pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that all staff have high expectations of behaviour and conduct throughout the school day and eradicate low-level disruption during lessons
 - ensuring that the whole-school behaviour policy is consistently applied by staff and followed by all pupils
 - improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan learning activities that challenge all students to make at least good progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour has been too positive. This has meant that they have not put the right actions in place quickly enough to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improved, and that behaviour is consistently good. Leaders have introduced a new policy for managing behaviour, but not all staff have implemented it effectively.
- The impact of additional funding to support and improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is not evaluated sharply enough by leaders, including governors, so that they can determine which strategies are the most effective for improving outcomes. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been too low for too long.
- Leaders have identified the right priorities for improving the school and the actions required. However, the monitoring and evaluation of this planning is not sharp enough and is not supported by clear success criteria to demonstrate fully the impact intended.
- The quality of subject leadership is not consistently good. Recently, the quality of middle leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of new leaders. Subject leaders are now beginning to ensure that teachers use information about pupils' starting points to plan learning which meets pupils' needs more effectively. However, leaders are at an early stage of implementing a new progress-tracking and reporting system and, currently, the use of this information is inconsistent.
- Until recently, leaders have not acted decisively to address the inconsistent quality of teaching and low expectations in the sixth form. Students have not made the progress of which they are capable in a range of subjects for at least the last two years.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new programme of professional learning for staff. Staff coaching and curriculum planning for delivering 'The big question' routinely in lessons are two examples of this. The training is proving effective in motivating staff, but it is too soon to judge its impact on raising standards and sustaining the engagement of pupils.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective and strengthening. The additional funding for eligible pupils is now better focused on ensuring that more pupils make the progress that they should. Additional adults, including teaching assistants, are providing effective support in the classroom. Pupils talk very positively about the support they receive from the specialist resource base for hearing impairment. This includes the specific support provided by communication assistants.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum offer is broad and balanced and that it is regularly reviewed. New vocational courses are being developed, although it is too early to see the impact of these on achievement.
- The school has received effective support from the local authority in, for example, supporting the strengthening of safeguarding procedures and in providing an accurate overview of the school.
- Pastoral leadership is a strength of the school, particularly in the care extended

towards pupils who may find themselves in difficulty.

- The programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic development is effective, well planned and responsive to pupils' needs and interests. Pupils benefit from a wide range of stimulating experiences that develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues and their understanding of fundamental British values. However, not all pupils demonstrate these values.
- A carefully planned programme of careers education has been implemented from Year 7 to the end of Year 11 to support pupils with their next steps in education, employment or training. Almost all pupils secure suitable placements by the end of key stage 4.
- The catch-up funding for literacy and numeracy is effective in ensuring that those pupils who begin school with low levels of knowledge, understanding and skills are able to catch up with their peers.
- Newly qualified teachers say that they receive effective support as they commence their professional careers.
- Opportunities for extra-curricular activity are wide-ranging, and pupils say that they feel positive about the range of opportunities available to them and the quality of the facilities offered by the school. Examples of the activities available include a range of sports, music, film club, academic catch-up and revision clinics.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is strengthening.
- Governors do not yet have a sharp enough understanding of the impact of the school's work to improve outcomes for pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils. They have not held leaders stringently to account for the use of pupil premium funding. Governors have not sufficiently challenged leaders on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are skilled and experienced. They are kept well informed about developments in school. For example, they know about the successful impact of the school's strategy to reduce external exclusions by the implementation of the withdrawal room. They conduct visits to the school to support the monitoring of key strategic activities, including having an in-depth oversight of safeguarding.
- Governors are committed to the school and are keen to see rapid improvements in pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose.
- Checks made when recruiting staff are effective and monitored by senior leaders and governors. Procedures are in place for ensuring that all visitors are suitably checked.
- The designated safeguarding lead is very well supported by a team of trained staff, including a governor. All staff receive regular training about safeguarding processes and procedures. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils

receive the right support.

- All staff understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Recently, systems have been enhanced to ensure that all records are detailed and organised effectively. These records demonstrate that prompt actions are taken where necessary to keep pupils safe. The care for pupils who are vulnerable is sensitive, thorough and well documented.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They can identify which adults they need to go to if they have any worries or concerns. The majority of parents and carers agree that their child feels safe in school and that the pastoral care for pupils is a positive feature of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is too inconsistent between subjects. While the subject knowledge of teachers is strong, it is not used consistently well enough to inspire and enthuse pupils in their learning. Pupils say that their enjoyment of learning is too variable because of this.
- Teachers do not routinely use information about pupils' prior attainment to ensure that their needs are identified or that work is set at the right level. This includes planning to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and consistently adapting work, where appropriate, to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills. Consequently, pupils are not sure how to make the consistently strong progress that they should.
- Not all teachers use questioning effectively to explore pupils' understanding fully. Too often, questioning does not consistently deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills. There are occasions where questioning is used more effectively to probe and deepen understanding. This was observed, for example, in English, drama and food technology.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's policy on feedback. Pupils' workbooks across a range of subjects confirmed this. Consequently, pupils are unsure how to improve or extend their learning.
- The quality of presentation in pupils' workbooks is too variable, particularly in boys' work.
- The setting of homework tasks is inconsistent. A significant proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey expressed concern about the variability in teachers' expectations and setting of homework tasks.
- Additional adults support pupils who have SEN effectively. Their actions are helping to improve the progress made by lower-attaining pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils who have hearing impairments spoke positively about the help and support that they receive from communication assistants.
- Inspectors found that relationships between pupils and their teachers are mostly

positive. Most pupils follow instructions from their teachers promptly and work well on their own and with others to share information and ideas. Inspectors observed this to be particularly effective in physical education and technology.

- Opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and communication skills are well planned. Thoughtful lesson planning and the creation of resources which apply the school's 'Big question' initiative have helped to make technical subject words and examination instructions easier for pupils to recognise.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There is a well-coordinated programme of learning for personal development, including tutor time and assembly. Pupil's feedback is also used to identify issues that they would like to explore. Examples include healthy relationships, personal safety, online safety and emotional health and well-being. These themes are further supported by frequent visits from external sources, such as the local police force about knife and hate crime, and health professionals and a local authority intervention team on developing positive attitudes about healthy relationships.
- Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is achieved well through a range of curriculum and external-speaker opportunities. This includes, for example, the 'island project' taught at key stage 3, which successfully ties together the values of tolerance, democracy and individual liberty. Pupils also learn about hate crime and extremism from visits by the local 'Got your back' service to support the moral and social development of pupils. The vast majority of pupils demonstrate these values in school.
- Pupils are well informed about their next steps in education, employment or training and the vast majority of pupils secure places that meet their needs and aspirations. This is because pupils receive a carefully planned programme of careers information, advice and guidance, which commences in Year 7 and includes access to impartial careers advice as pupils progress through the school. The careers programme is complemented by the opportunity for work experience for pupils in Year 10.
- Recently, a new system has been implemented to enhance the school's response to bullying. School records show that incidences of bullying are low and pupils say that they are confident any issues would be handled quickly and effectively. A large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agreed.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school, and pupils and parents say that they value the care and support provided towards meeting the welfare needs of individual pupils. Furthermore, pupils engage in charitable work to raise funds for a range of causes in support of the needs of others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The vast majority of pupils are polite, courteous and conduct themselves very well throughout the school day. However, a small minority of pupils do not conduct themselves well or demonstrate the respect that they should. Pupils say that they sometimes see or encounter disrespectful or intimidating behaviour, particularly during breaktime, outdoors at lunchtime and in the corridors during movement between lessons. This behaviour undermines the values taught within the personal development curriculum.
- While pupils' attitudes in lessons are positive, their levels of concentration can vary. When learning is not planned at the right level or is not sufficiently engaging, their concentration wanes and low-level disruption results. Staff do not always challenge this effectively.
- Despite the implementation of a new consequences system, pupils say that it is not effective because staff do not always use the system or manage behaviour consistently. Some staff who responded to Ofsted's survey also stated that behaviour is not managed consistently.
- The introduction of the new withdrawal room to meet the needs of pupils at risk of external exclusion has had a positive impact. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has reduced over time and is below the national average.
- School records show that the small number of pupils receiving alternative provision off-site attend and behave well. However, the progress made by these pupils in their learning is not sufficiently well tracked. Teachers do not always know how well these pupils are doing.
- Attendance is good. Overall absence is currently in line with the national average and has been so for some time. Levels of persistent absence have improved since 2016 and are below the national average. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school remains too high.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although attainment is above average, it is not as high as it should be because pupils are not making enough progress. At the end of key stage 4 in 2017, progress was weak and pupils underachieved overall. The progress made by pupils in English, science, humanities, languages and across a range of optional subjects was significantly below the national average.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils was well below that of other pupils nationally in 2016 and 2017. While there has been some improvement in English and mathematics, these pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Current disadvantaged pupils are beginning to make better progress than they did previously.
- The achievement of the most able pupils declined sharply in 2017. There are indications that the progress of current most-able pupils is improving; however, it remains variable. This is because the quality of teaching does not consistently challenge these pupils to raise their level of achievement.

- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved since 2016. In 2017, their progress was above the national average in science and mathematics. However, overall progress remains below that made by other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- The school's own performance information, work in pupils' books and evidence from lesson observations indicate that current pupils are making better progress than they did in 2017 in many, but not all, subjects.
- Pupils are well informed about the choices and opportunities available for the next stage of their education or training. The quality of advice and information provided to pupils and parents is informative and pupils benefit from additional impartial careers advice. The proportion of pupils entering further education, employment or training is above the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is inconsistent. Although the subject knowledge of teachers is secure, expectations are not high enough. The quality of questioning is too variable in deepening students' understanding. Students are not consistently challenged so that they become confident in knowing how to make good progress.
- Students attain well, but they do not make strong progress across a range of subjects. Progress in 2016 and 2017 was significantly below the national average. The school's own information about the progress of current students in Year 13 also indicates that students do not achieve the grades of which they are capable.
- In 2017, the outcomes for disadvantaged students were significantly below expectation and in the bottom 20% of students nationally.
- The small number of students who had not secured a standard pass or better in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4 are successful in achieving these qualifications.
- The proportion of students who complete their courses is high and above the national average.
- Students receive effective pastoral support during tutor time and personal development sessions. A carefully planned tutor programme is effective in developing students' understanding about themes including personal safety, healthy relationships and how they can stay healthy. Relationships between staff and students are very positive and students say that they enjoy the time they spend in the sixth form.
- The school provides good careers information, support and guidance for students about their next steps. They have a good understanding about a range of future opportunities, such as higher education and apprenticeships. As a result, the proportion who move on to further education, employment and training is higher than the national average.
- There is a good range of non-qualification activities. For example, all students in Year 12 are expected to be mentors for younger pupils in the school to support their learning. A number of students have taken the Extended Project Qualification. Students in Year 13 are the UK CanSat champions for 2018, in a competition run by the

European Space Agency. Additionally, all students participate in meaningful work experience.

- The leadership of the sixth form is developing. Programmes of study meet requirements and leaders have an accurate view about the areas in need of further improvement. However, more needs to be done to identify and support students who are underachieving.
- Students' conduct and behaviour are positive. They are polite, courteous and helpful.

School details

Unique reference number	137911
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10047593

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1341
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. William Bates
Headteacher	Mr Alan Brady
Telephone number	01332551921
Website	http://woodlands.derby.sch.uk/
Email address	a.brady@woodlands.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 April 2014

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are below the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school has a specialist resource base for 14 pupils who have hearing impairments.

- A very small number of pupils attend curriculum provision off-site at the Kingsmead School.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspectors observed 42 parts of lessons across the main school and sixth form, in a range of subjects. They carried out 17 observations jointly with senior school leaders. Inspectors also visited tutor time and assembly.
- Inspectors spoke with six groups of pupils, including one group from the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers responsible for teaching and learning, outcomes, behaviour and personal development and the sixth form. Inspectors also spoke with the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader, and pastoral and subject leaders. A meeting was held with five governors. The lead inspector also met with an adviser from the local authority.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation; pupils' performance information and a selection of pupils' workbooks; the governing body minutes of meetings; behaviour logs; whole-school and curriculum plans; and school policies in relation to safeguarding, behaviour and teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors also evaluated 301 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

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Jason Brooks	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Lyn-Cook	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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