

Chiltern Wood School

Verney Avenue, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 3NE

Inspection dates

8–9 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders' self-evaluation of school effectiveness is accurate. The headteacher and deputy headteachers have established a thoughtful, individualised approach which matches the needs of pupils extremely well.
- Since its formation, the school has successfully strengthened its leadership capacity. Leaders have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Nevertheless, new middle leaders are not yet contributing fully to all aspects of the school's development.
- Pupils study a balanced curriculum that gives appropriate emphasis to developing pupils' independence and confidence. Leaders carefully review the curriculum, making appropriate adaptations. However, pupils' progress in writing is highly variable.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff give great attention to the individual needs of each pupil. This means that pupils feel safe and enjoy school.
- Pupils make secure progress, both academically and in their personal and social development. However, leaders do not yet make full use of school performance information to show the positive impact that they are having on pupils' achievement.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff know their pupils extremely well. Leaders ensure that teachers plan carefully to meet the individual needs of pupils.
- Leaders work closely with families to ensure that children in the early years settle into school quickly. As a result, children, including those who have very complex needs, get off to a good start.
- The post-16 provision successfully prepares students for adulthood and life beyond school. Leaders ensure that students achieve well and become more independent.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Strong relationships between staff and pupils enable pupils, including those who have previously had difficulty in managing their behaviour, to improve. As a result, behaviour rarely disrupts lessons.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the effectiveness of the school. They are knowledgeable and provide appropriate challenge and support for school leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills and expertise of middle leaders so that they can contribute more strongly to raising standards
 - ensuring that leaders make best use of pupil performance information to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work on accelerating pupil progress, including the impact of personal and social intervention programmes.
- Further improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, particularly in writing, so that more pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, who is well supported by his senior leadership team, has a clear vision which is shared widely across the staff team. Leaders' commitment to the school has ensured that the school's effectiveness has been sustained through a period of change and rapid growth.
- Leaders have high expectations of staff. Regular monitoring activity and reviews ensure that leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of teaching. Leaders are determined that the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. They make good use of a variety of information to hold teachers to account and are quick to challenge and support underperformance. Consequently, teaching is consistently good.
- The curriculum has been carefully designed and structured to meet the individual needs of pupils regardless of their age or need. Comprehensive planning ensures that the unique needs of each pupil are identified and addressed effectively. Within the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to increase their independence and confidence through enriching activities such as outdoor learning, including sailing. However, learning activities do not reliably provide opportunities for pupils to make effective progress in the development of their writing skills.
- Middle leaders, including department leads and subject leads, are enthusiastic about developing their respective areas. They provide support to teachers and contribute effectively to improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, they do not yet make full use of performance information, including that relating to personal and social aspects of learning, to demonstrate their impact on raising standards further.
- Leaders are committed to developing staff skills and expertise through appropriate training. This includes external qualifications linked directly to areas of responsibility, and individual developmental needs. As a result, staff feel well supported to develop their knowledge and expertise and to improve their practice.
- Senior leaders make good use of academic performance information to inform their school improvement planning and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders do not yet make use of non-academic performance information to ensure that pupils' progress in all areas of learning is monitored and evaluated.
- Most parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the care and support given to families and value the opportunities for daily communication through electronic systems. Parents feel that their children are safe and happy at school.
- Leaders evaluate the use of pupil premium funding well. Detailed case studies show the positive impact of pupil premium spending on individual pupils. Consequently, leaders and governors are justifiably confident that the pupil premium is used successfully in helping disadvantaged pupils to make the same or better progress than non-disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors make good use of their focused visits to gather relevant information about key aspects of the school. Consequently, they have gained a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, enabling them to ask pertinent questions, for example about pupils' progress.
- Governors are highly motivated. They work well together and strengthen their skills through peer support and training. By conducting a self-evaluation exercise, the governing body has highlighted gaps in its knowledge and expertise and has recruited new members, tactically, to fill these gaps.
- Governors recognise that the school has experienced a period of significant upheaval following the amalgamation of two schools. Through close liaison with senior leaders, governors ensured that these changes were well managed. The introduction of a well-being programme meant that staff, pupils and parents were supported throughout the process.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils are safe. This includes providing support that goes beyond their statutory duties, such as conducting home visits. All staff demonstrate a high level of care for pupils and know how to keep them safe.
- Staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. They understand their responsibilities and know the processes they need to follow to protect the pupils in their care.
- Pupils, including those who are new to the school, told inspectors that they feel safe when they are in school and that they know who to talk to if they are worried.
- Appropriate checks are made on staff, and records are accurately maintained. Governors meet with relevant staff each term to ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are compliant with statutory guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers, senior support assistants and teaching assistants work together extremely well. This is because there is a shared understanding that the individual learning needs of each pupil come first. Specialist therapists work in classrooms to further enhance pupils' learning.
- Adults use resources, equipment and activities creatively to provide interesting and enjoyable multi-sensory learning experiences for pupils. For instance, during a history lesson, pupils were encouraged to cooperate with each other and develop their understanding of Viking invasions by role-playing rowing a Viking ship.
- Pupils are well supported to develop their independence and social skills outside the classroom. Carefully planned community visits enable pupils to develop and practise their skills in real-life situations. This prepares them well for life beyond school.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school. Adults know

the pupils extremely well and are adept at recognising the smallest steps of progress that pupils make. Timely use of focused praise and reward systems means that pupils know what they have done well and can take pride in their achievements.

- Adults have high expectations of pupils. Their skilful use of appropriate levels of prompting and questioning means that pupils, including those with the most profound needs, are challenged to succeed. The most able pupils say they feel challenged, describing some lessons as 'difficult' and 'tricky'.
- Classrooms provide pupils with a calm and consistent learning environment. Most pupils are focused and engaged during lessons. Where this is not the case, staff quickly identify the reasons and provide appropriate support. This includes taking pupils out of class for a short break to enable them to remain calm.
- Learning activities are well matched to the needs of each pupil. The school's individual pupil progress and provision documents precisely identify targets to work towards from each part of the curriculum. Pupils' targets also relate well to outcomes that are identified in their education, health and care plans.
- The teaching of writing is inconsistent. Staff do not always model good handwriting, and teachers do not develop pupils' knowledge, skills or understanding of writing in a reliable way. This means that pupils cannot always build on their previous writing experiences. As a result, pupils' progress in writing across the school is variable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The central ethos of 'success through well-being' is evident throughout the school. Staff understand the needs of individual pupils extremely well. They are sensitive to the early signs that a pupil is becoming upset and are quick to respond. Staff swiftly offer reassurance, change an activity or adapt the level of challenge to support pupils to remain calm.
- Parents feel well supported and are highly positive about the level of care their children receive at the school. One parent commented: 'All staff go above and beyond to ensure that all children are cared for, made to feel welcome and safe.' Many comment positively on the excellent communication between home and school.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils enable pupils to build trust in the adults who work with them. This means that pupils are willing to take risks, including taking more responsibility for their own safety and developing their independence. Leaders ensure that pupils who are less capable of making their own decisions are well protected.
- The curriculum places a high level of importance on developing pupils' physical, social and personal skills. Staff carefully monitor progress in each area. This enables pupils to build their self-confidence and self-esteem very effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted throughout the school day. For instance, during a morning 'hello' session, pupils were taught about

humour and how to understand when another person is telling a joke.

- Pupils who spoke to inspectors, or completed the Ofsted pupil survey, say that they enjoy coming to school and that they feel safe. They do not think bullying is an issue in the school and say that staff deal with it quickly if it does occur.
- Pupils with complex healthcare needs are well supported by specialist school-based staff. Agreed care procedures are in place for each pupil. This enables staff to manage medical needs closely to ensure that pupils' health is as good as it can be and that they are able to take part in lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is well supported in lessons and during social times through the careful deployment of staff and well-established routines.
- A colour-based system is used very effectively in some classrooms to help pupils understand the different levels of their behaviour. Staff role model the system using the different colours to indicate how they are feeling. Behaviour support plans are put in place for pupils who have more significant levels of challenging behaviour. Both approaches provide clear strategies for staff to support pupils in regaining control of their own behaviour, and to keep the pupils and others safe.
- Since her appointment, the assistant headteacher has made significant improvements to the school's procedures for managing and supporting behaviour. Focused training has resulted in staff having a common understanding of behaviour. Their expertise in identifying the possible causes of misbehaviour has increased, and strategies are put in place swiftly when incidents of misbehaviour do occur.
- Improved reporting systems have led to incidents of misbehaviour being recorded more consistently. Careful analysis of recorded incidents ensures that leaders and governors have an improved picture of patterns and trends in behaviour. This enables them to take relevant action, for instance by increasing therapeutic support to identified pupils so the pupil can manage their own behaviour more effectively.
- There is a strong focus across the school on de-escalating pupil misbehaviour. Nevertheless, there are occasions when pupils present very challenging behaviour that can require staff to physically intervene. Leaders have invested in extensive training for staff and, as a result, staff manage pupils' most challenging behaviours safely and effectively. Consequently, the number of incidents is beginning to decline.
- Pupils are keen to come to school. One parent commented: 'My son wants to come to school every day.' Most pupils who attend less frequently have a medical reason for this. Where this is not the case, there are clear procedures in place to support families to improve their children's attendance. Leaders are persistent in tackling the irregular attendance of some pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school with a very wide range of starting points. Many pupils have highly complex and profound needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Leaders give close attention to class groupings. The age and academic abilities of each pupil are carefully considered, as well as other factors such as pupils' behaviour and medical needs. This ensures that pupils benefit from the most appropriate curriculum offer.
- This is the school's first year of using new assessment criteria. Based on the school's own progression data and evidence seen in learning journals, most pupils make good progress, especially in mathematics. However, pupils' progress in writing is not as strong.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are supported effectively by high-quality teaching and specialist therapists to make the best progress they can over time. Their highly complex needs and additional medical conditions often have a significant impact on their attendance and levels of engagement during lessons, leading to some unevenness in their progress.
- Leaders carefully consider the use of additional funding, making sure it is used extremely effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with or better than non-disadvantaged pupils across all areas of the curriculum.
- Leaders make effective use of termly monitoring and evaluation meetings with parents to identify where pupils are making lower than expected progress. Swift action is taken to identify reasons for weaker progress. This allows appropriate strategies to be put in place to support pupils to achieve well.
- Parents are highly positive about the progress their children make. One parent reported, 'I am extremely happy my son is at the school and he is making great progress.' Another said, 'We have seen our son grow in confidence and academically, to levels we never thought we would see.'
- The school's performance information for 2018 indicates that pupils with severe learning difficulties or complex autism spectrum disorders make less progress than pupils with moderate learning difficulties. However, by undertaking effective moderation work with external partnerships, leaders have identified that the new assessment framework does not fully meet the needs of the school. Swift action has been taken to amend the assessment criteria within the framework so that it is more effective in enabling leaders to gain an accurate understanding of the progress pupils in these groups are making. It is too soon to see the impact of these changes on the ability of leaders to better capture the small steps of progress pupils make.
- The performance of pupils of Pakistani heritage, including those who speak English as an additional language, is lower than that of pupils from other ethnic groups, particularly in reading and writing. Leaders are rightly focused on further improving outcomes for this group of pupils.
- Leaders do not yet make full use of school performance information to show the impact of personal and social intervention programmes on pupils' progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The school has a very small number of early years children. Children join the early years with widely varying starting points that are much lower than those typical for their age. Leaders think carefully about where to place children so that the curriculum is well suited to their needs.
- Strong transition arrangements are in place. Close liaison by staff with families helps children to make a positive transition into the school. Parents are invited to spend time in school with their children. This helps staff to develop trusting relationships with the family and to understand how best to communicate with the children. As a result, children settle quickly into school.
- Teaching for early years children is good. A wide range of different indoor and outdoor learning activities are planned that are relevant to the children's, often profound, needs. Children are usually taught with older lower-school pupils. This prepares them effectively for the next stage of school.
- Adults know the individual needs of pupils extremely well. Great care is taken to ensure that the right level of support and supervision is given to each child. As a result, pupils quickly learn how to behave more appropriately and begin to engage in activities. Staff ensure that early years welfare requirements are met.
- Detailed planning and evidence gathering ensure that teachers monitor and evaluate effectively each child's progress towards their individual targets. Learning journeys show that children make at least good progress over time, including with their behaviour and levels of concentration. Teachers' assessments and planned next steps are accurate.
- Children often join the school with play skills that are below those typical for their age. Leaders have made effective use of external partnerships to support staff to understand better how children, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, can learn through play. Recent additions to the school environment provide enhanced opportunities for children to learn about, and from, play.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The school has a small cohort of post-16 students. Leaders ensure that students are placed in appropriate class groups so that they can access a relevant curriculum. The strong emphasis within the curriculum on promoting students' independence and skills for living is highly effective in preparing students for the next phase of life.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use focused, community-based activities to make learning meaningful and relevant for students' lives after school. For example, students go shopping and make use of the local leisure centre. Most students gain a nationally accredited award, which enhances their self-esteem.
- Students make good progress. Teachers help students to extend their learning from previous lessons and develop their independence through planned repetition. Adults make good use of naturally arising opportunities to encourage students to think more deeply and problem solve.
- Staff adapt activities well to meet students' differing needs. For example, students with more complex or profound needs access activities, such as making simple choices, that enable them to make small steps of progress towards being as independent as

possible. On rare occasions, when the pace of learning is not quick enough, students working at this level lose focus, which restricts their progress.

- Students undertake work-based placements accompanied by staff. This helps students to experience the world of work and gain important work-related skills. As far as possible, placements are selected to reflect students' interests and next steps. Leaders recognise that work experience opportunities need to be expanded to ensure that they are tailored more precisely to each student's aspirations for their future lives.
- Students are safe and feel safe. High-quality relationships between staff and students help to develop students' confidence and self-assurance. The vast majority of students move on to meaningful and suitable further education, training or employment when they leave the school.

School details

Unique reference number	110578
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10058119

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	6
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bridget Ledson
Headteacher	Bradley Taylor
Telephone number	01494 532 621
Website	www.chilternwood.bucks.sch.uk
Email address	office@chilternwood.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in 2016 following the amalgamation of Maplewood School and Chiltern Gate School. The school operates across a split site.
- The school provides education for pupils who have moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils have one or more additional needs, including autism spectrum disorders, medical needs, sensory impairments, and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Currently, the school has six children in the early years.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils who speak English as an

additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the assistant headteacher and other leaders with significant responsibilities. The lead inspector also met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body and the vice chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout all the school, all with the headteacher or the deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and discussed pupils' progress with leaders.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views about the school. The views of the 22 pupils who responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey were also considered.
- The views of the 20 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 15 additional free-text comments were considered. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents at the start of both days of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 84 staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, and school improvement planning, and looked at minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding and recruitment procedures.

Inspection team

Janis Rogers, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ross Macdonald	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

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