

Inspection of Woodlands School

Tilley Green, Wem, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 5PJ

Inspection dates: 12–13 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' experiences at school are mixed. In key stage 2, pupils are well cared for. They make good progress. Staff have high expectations. However, the school fails pupils in key stages 3 and 4. Pupils do not make the progress they are capable of because staff do not manage behaviour in lessons well. They do not take into account the pupils' special needs. The work set often lacks challenge and does not build on what pupils already know.

Leaders want pupils to do well. Many go on to study at college. However, the majority of pupils do not continue in education or gain employment when they leave. This is because they are not fully prepared for life beyond school.

Learning is disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour is dealt with differently by different staff. They are not clear about the consequences when they do not behave. Sometimes, the way that behaviour is managed by staff puts pupils' safety at risk. Not all pupils are happy in school.

Pupils say that bullying happens, but staff sort it out. Pupils say that some staff listen to them, help them to stay safe and support them when they find things difficult.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The quality of education is inadequate. The new leadership team knows the weaknesses in the curriculum. The curriculum in mathematics and science is well sequenced. Pupils in these lessons are more engaged in their learning. However, in many other subjects this is not the case. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.

Staff do not use the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans well enough. They do not adapt their teaching or the learning environment to meet pupils' needs. For example, pupils who struggle to understand verbal instructions do not have access to visual prompts. In some subjects, such as mathematics, science and food technology, teachers plan learning in small steps. They make the work interesting. They ensure that the work is at the right level for pupils. Pupils become immersed in learning and make progress. However, this is not the case in other subjects. Pupils are not motivated to learn. They behave badly and prevent other pupils from learning.

Leaders involve staff in developing new policies to change the ethos of school. Leaders support staff and provide training to help them understand why pupils behave as they do. Unfortunately, many staff do not fully understand this. As a result, pupils' behaviour in key stages 3 and 4 has, at times, become unsafe.

Many pupils make progress with reading. However, some pupils refuse to read. Those that do often cannot recall what they have read. Silent reading at the start of the day does not develop a love of reading. For some pupils it becomes a source of frustration and conflict. Leaders have not fully thought through their approach to improving reading.

The curriculum is not well sequenced, planned or delivered. Learning time is wasted. Tutor time is uncoordinated and lacks purpose. In some subjects, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well embedded. However, it is left to individual teachers to decide which aspects are taught. This means that some pupils get richer experiences than others.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes have deteriorated. This stops the majority of pupils from learning. Staff do not consistently challenge pupils when they swear. Many pupils leave the classroom during lessons. Pupils told inspectors that there are no consequences. As a result, behaviour deteriorates further. Many pupils feel unsafe in school.

Pupils say that they enjoy their college experience. The careers programme is well thought out and provides information about pupils' next steps. The school provides individualised support for pupils for example, through music therapy. Staff also work with external agencies such as the police to support pupils to stay safe.

At Acorn Bishops Castle and Acorn Oswestry (two key stage 2 satellite sites), staff

have created a calm environment for pupils to learn and thrive. Pupils are respectful and follow the rules. Subject leaders quickly identify the learning needs of pupils. They set challenging and engaging work. This helps pupils to make progress academically, emotionally and socially. In Acorns, pupils feel happy and feel safe.

Reading is a priority at Acorns. Staff are well trained and understand how to support and develop pupils' skills in reading. Pupils read every day. They make strong progress and enjoy reading. Teachers target interventions to improve the pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. Parents say that the staff understand and help their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

At times, pupils' safety is at risk because staff do not manage pupils' behaviour well. Leaders have not always undertaken the agreed safeguarding checks when sending pupils to off-site provision. This puts pupils' safety at risk.

Staff training is up to date. Staff log concerns. Designated safeguarding leads maintain an oversight of these records. They escalate cases to the local authority when needed. They use their safeguarding knowledge to develop intervention programmes to improve pupils' ability to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have involved staff in the development of a new behaviour management system. However, it not consistently applied because not all members of the staff team fully understand it. Leaders need to take urgent action to ensure that all staff are clear about their responsibilities to manage behaviour. Staff training should focus on how to improve classroom behaviour management.
- Pupils have little incentive to engage positively in learning and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Leaders need to work with staff and pupils to review the current rewards and consequences available. They should make sure that behaviour expectations are clear and positive behaviours are rewarded.
- Leaders share information to support pupils' emotional health and well-being well. However, they do not ensure that information in the pupils' EHC plans is used effectively to plan learning. As a result, pupils' needs are not met effectively. Leaders need to develop staff understanding of special needs. They should support staff to use the information in pupils' EHC plans to develop a more accessible learning environment. This information should also inform classroom practice and teaching methodology.
- Learning time is not well planned. Many areas of the curriculum are not coherently planned or sequenced. Pupils spend too much time getting ready to learn. Learning often lacks the challenge necessary to help the pupils make

progress. As a matter of urgency, leaders need to establish essential routines and procedures in lessons. They should aim for learning to commence promptly.

- Leaders do not currently have a strategic oversight of all the personal development opportunities within the curriculum. Where individual teachers have planned the learning to include the promotion of British Values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils gain rich experiences. However, these experiences are not delivered throughout the curriculum in a sequenced way. Leaders need to plan for these opportunities at a school-wide level.
- Leaders should set high expectations for behaviour and the quality of education. They should ensure that more pupils have the right skills and qualifications needed to access the next steps of their learning, and have the resilience to maintain their learning.
- Leaders should put in place systems and procedures that ensure that pupils do not put themselves at risk by being able to abscond or by engaging in unsafe activities in school.
- Off-site provision provides pupils with a bespoke education experience that meets their needs. However, leaders need to implement consistently the quality assurance system they have designed to ensure that pupils are safe in these alternative settings. They should ensure that clear targets are set for the pupils' social, emotional and academic success.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	123630
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10088407
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	Shropshire
Chair of governing body	Paul Nicholson
Headteacher	Julia Taylor
Website	www.woodlandscentre.org
Date of previous inspection	29–30 April 2015

Information about this school

- The Woodlands centre was restructured following the retirement of the head of centre in September 2019. The role of headteacher was created and a new deputy headteacher was appointed.
- The school now provides education for pupils aged from 7 to 16 through the development of key stage 2 provision on two satellite sites called Acorns. These are based in Bishop’s Castle and Oswestry.
- The school provides provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs who often have additional complex learning needs.
- The school uses alternative provision provided by Red George, Bright Star Boxing, St Peter’s Nursery, Project Farm, Treflach Farm, Grease-Monkeys, RENU, Beats-a-bar Music Project, Lower Bush Farm and Smash-Life.

Information about this inspection

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.

- We carried this inspection out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act to allow inspectors to examine in more detail whether leaders and governors were providing a good standard of education.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum leaders. They met with groups of teaching and non-teaching staff and groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with governors including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of English, reading, mathematics and humanities. Inspectors also visited a wide range of lessons in other subjects and listened to pupils read. They discussed the curriculum design and delivery with leaders, carried out lesson visits, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing leaders' knowledge, records and actions. This included looking at the school's single central record of employment checks and a sample of case files. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke to pupils and staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. We spoke to pupils about the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through discussions and by considering four written responses. Inspectors considered the three free-text responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 12 recent responses to the questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Field, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo Owen	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019