

Inspection of Allestree Woodlands School

Blenheim Drive, Allestree, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 2LW

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a highly inclusive school. The school's core values of courage, optimism, regard, and endeavour are a key part of school life. Adults and pupils show mutual respect to each other. Pupils feel well supported in their studies. They are confident to ask questions in lessons or to ask for extra help. Pupils are polite and well-mannered when moving around the school site. At break and lunchtimes, pupils can engage in wider curriculum activities. These activities include chess and football. Lessons are calm and disruption is rarely seen. Pupils feel safe at Allestree Woodlands School.

The school has high expectations of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in all parts of school life, including trips and wider curriculum activities. Pupils with SEND access most lessons within the main school. The school uses additional adults to support them in the classroom. Some of these adults use British Sign Language. As a result, pupils with a hearing impairment can fully participate in all parts of the lesson.

Pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. This consists of over 100 clubs. Student leaders undertake an active role in contributing to the wider school.

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

The school has a well-planned curriculum in place. It knows what it wants pupils to learn and by when. The school has thought about why particular knowledge is important. Parts of the curriculum are aspirational. For example, in English, pupils study a wide range of quality books. This encourages debate around themes such as racism and misogyny. Good relationships exist within the classroom. Pupils can, therefore, debate sensitive subject matter. In most subjects, the learning journey is well structured for sixth-form students.

The school is proud of the recent adaptations to its reading curriculum. These have enhanced the programme for pupils who are struggling to learn to read with fluency. Extra staff are employed to support early readers. Staff have been trained well to support early reading. The reading programme is showing early signs of success. Pupils are feeling more confident with their reading. They state that this is enabling them to further access other subjects.

The school quickly identifies pupils who need extra help with their work. Teachers use relevant strategies to help pupils with SEND access their work. These strategies are consistently used.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge. They explain key learning by breaking down complex ideas. Teachers use assessment well to understand what pupils know. This reflects recent changes to practice that are in place for most

subjects. In a minority of subject areas, however, this continues to develop. Most pupils now achieve in line with national expectations.

The school works well with parents and carers and other organisations to improve pupils' attendance when this is necessary. This has brought about a marked improvement in attendance. Parents are positive about how the school works with them to remove attendance barriers. The school has introduced innovative measures to improve the level of attendance for those pupils who have the highest level of absence. This is showing early signs of success. The school analyses the reasons for absence meticulously. However, some pupil groups still do not attend as regularly as they should. Leaders know that this creates gaps in learning for some pupils. Some disadvantaged pupils are not making the progress leaders would like.

Pupils benefit from a curriculum that extends beyond the academic. They learn about world faiths. Inclusion is a theme that runs strongly throughout the school. As a result, pupils adopt the attitude that 'everyone is equally welcome'. Careers advice within the school promotes a wide range of vocations, university courses and apprenticeships. All sixth-form students have benefited from work experience. This includes placements at theatres, solicitors and sporting venues. The personal development programme sets out how pupils can keep themselves safe. It covers healthy eating and the importance of exercise. Sixth-form students learn about driving safety. They participate weekly in physical exercise during the school day.

The large majority of staff enjoy working at this school. Staff benefit from high-quality and well-planned professional development. Leaders have made significant improvements at this school. They have done this in a considerate way to make the improvements sustainable. Staff understand that change was needed. They support leaders in bringing about changes. Governors are well informed about school priorities. They support the school to keep getting better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The attendance of some pupils remains too low. Leaders have made recent improvements, but these still require further development. Some pupils, particularly those that are most disadvantaged, have some gaps in their learning due to absence. The school needs to make sure that it continues to reduce absence for all pupils to reduce the gaps in knowledge and to improve pupil outcomes.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137911
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10324139
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1420
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rowland Travis
Headteacher	Gemma Penny
Website	http://woodlands.derby.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school has a specialist provision for hearing impaired pupils. At the time of inspection, 26 pupils were part of this unit.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers. It uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID 19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met with representative of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography, computing, physical education, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders and sampled work in art.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about pupils who are working off site at alternative provisions.

Inspection team

Lisa Harrison, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie McBrearty	Ofsted Inspector
Louisa Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Roche	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Sadler	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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