

Woodside School

Colyers Lane, Erith, Kent DA8 3PB

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2018

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Decisive leadership has significantly raised expectations for what pupils could and should be achieving.
- Leaders' vision for the school is shared by governors and staff. They are strongly committed to providing an excellent all-round education for all pupils.
- Governors use their expertise well to support and challenge leaders so that the school continues to improve. The federation with Belmont School is supporting well the drive to improve Woodside still further.
- A new primary curriculum is taught through interesting topics, as well as lessons in English and mathematics. The evidence so far suggests that, as a result, teaching is improving. Pupils are making better progress.
- The vocational and life skills courses for pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form meet pupils' needs well.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan interesting activities which help pupils to enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- Good relationships and mutual respect promote good behaviour and positive attitudes. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors.
- Good careers guidance and strong links with the local college greatly extend the range of opportunities for pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form.
- Exciting enrichment activities help pupils to learn more about the wider world and develop an understanding of British values.
- The welfare provision strongly supports pupils' personal development, as well as their academic progress.
- Regular updating of safeguarding procedures helps to keep pupils safe in school and to teach them how to stay safe outside school.
- Parents and carers feel that their children make good progress and enjoy school.
- Most pupils attend school regularly and fewer pupils are persistently absent.
- The challenge for pupils has improved but tends to be better in the secondary classes, particularly for the most able pupils.
- The school's assessment policy is not always used consistently enough to make sure that pupils make even better progress.
- Sometimes, adults are almost too eager to help pupils and do not allow them enough time to respond for themselves.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Building on what has been achieved, improve teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - increasing further the level of challenge in lessons, particularly in primary classes and for the most able pupils
 - further refining the school's assessment policy and ensuring that staff use the information consistently when planning the next steps
 - ensuring that staff allow pupils enough time to think and respond for themselves and develop greater independence and resilience.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are ambitious for the school and are keen to build on the improvement achieved in the last two years. The federation has had a very positive effect in helping the school to improve through sharper and more effective evaluation and planning.
- Leaders know where the school could be better and have clear improvement plans. The impact of their actions can already be seen in better teaching and better progress for pupils.
- The leadership team and governors monitor school performance closely, particularly the quality of teaching, and are prepared to take decisive action where necessary. They have made eliminating weaker teaching a major priority. The quality of teaching is now good, and the focus is on improving it further so that teaching is outstanding.
- Middle leaders understand their role in raising and maintaining high standards across the school. Their work is having a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress, as well as on the quality of teaching.
- A good programme of staff training develops teachers' skills and improves outcomes for pupils. Staff value the training and, consequently, teaching is good across the school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and the special educational needs coordinator's focus has been on improving the quality of annual reviews so that they better reflect pupils' and parents' views. Leaders are working to ensure that the support provided meets pupils' individual needs even better than currently.
- The funding for disadvantaged pupils is mainly used to provide additional support, and leaders keep its use and impact under review. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is broadly in line with other pupils in the school.
- The new primary curriculum aims to give pupils a wider range of experiences and ensure that basic skills are promoted in all areas. At a whole-school level, the regular use of special days and weeks – for example in the arts, science, technology and mathematics – gives pupils more opportunities to learn to be independent and also to work in teams. Pupils in Years 10 to 13 can take vocational courses on a part-time basis at Bexley College. This also promotes independence and helps to prepare them well for the next stage of their lives.
- Life skills and personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education are woven into the whole curriculum so that they are part of all subjects, as well as distinct lessons. Leaders' current checks on progress are showing that this approach is having a positive impact.
- The curriculum strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, projects in the previous year included work with other schools and the London Symphony Orchestra, culminating in a performance at the Royal Festival Hall. Pupils also visit theatres, art galleries and museums.
- The primary sports premium is used to provide more equipment and to allow pupils to experience a wider range of sports and take part successfully in competitive sports.

- Pupils are taught about the British values of democracy, respect, tolerance and the rule of law. The presentation of Civic Awards by the Mayor of Bexley at the town hall helps them to understand the role of democracy. A poppy display for Remembrance Sunday at the front of the school – and the pupils' work on display – showed a sensitive response to the occasion and respect for those it commemorated.

Governance of the school

- The governing body was established when the school became part of the Belmont Woodside Federation. The school was able to recruit experienced governors from both schools. Governors know the strengths and areas for improvement very well. They visit the school regularly, which helps them to evaluate different aspects of the school's work. They use their skills and expertise well to check the impact of decisions, as well as to support school development. They hold the school leaders to account in a constructive manner.
- The governing body has worked closely with the school and the local authority to try to resolve the issues around school transport and traffic at times when pupils are arriving and leaving.
- Governors undertake a range of training to ensure that they stay up to date with legal and other requirements. This includes the relevant training in safeguarding issues, including the 'Prevent' duty. They are very aware of potential safeguarding issues for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The information on the school website reflects the most up-to-date requirements for safeguarding and is available for parents. Staff have received up-to-date training on how to keep children safe. They know how to report any concerns they may have and any concerns are followed up in line with policies and procedures.
- Leaders carry out thorough pre-recruitment checks on the suitability of staff. Risk assessments help to ensure that pupils are kept safe in the school and when on visits or off-site activities. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that any issues are fully explored and pupils and families receive the help they need.
- A number of parents have raised safeguarding concerns around the arrival and departure of their children from school premises as a result of changes made to local authority arrangements for school transport. The governors and school leaders continue to work with the local authority to try to resolve the issues and, in the meantime, have increased the supervision at these times to minimise the risks. A small number of parents are not yet satisfied that enough has been done.
- The school uses PSHE and other lessons to help pupils to understand the risks that may affect them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their pupils very well and use a range of approaches to help them make good progress. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress, although some pupils have gaps in their learning because previous teaching was less effective. Staff are working hard to help pupils to catch up.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well so that pupils are able to learn in a calm and orderly environment. Teachers and support staff work well together to help pupils to build successfully on what they can already do. Activities are planned to help pupils become more independent, such as where younger pupils are expected to help with classroom organisation. In primary classes, the increasing use of sensory resources and stimuli is helping pupils to learn more effectively.
- Pupils are well supported in class and, where this is most effective, it encourages pupils to try again so that they work out the answer or solution for themselves. Some of the most able pupils are not always challenged to think for themselves enough. In the key stage 1 and 2 classes, teaching assistants sometimes give help too quickly from a desire to ensure that pupils feel supported.
- Teachers use the school assessment policy to check on and record pupils' progress. They make sure that they identify and praise small steps which show that pupils are making real progress. Where the policy is used best, the checks give pupils useful feedback to help them improve and help staff to plan the next steps. The use of the assessment policy is not always consistently effective enough to ensure that all pupils can make even better progress.
- In English lessons and in other subjects, teachers make sure that pupils develop their literacy skills as much as possible and, from a young age, they enjoy books and stories. The mathematics week focused on using mathematical games to build pupils' confidence in using their skills and made learning fun. Pupils said they enjoyed practical work in different subjects.
- The school aims to prepare its pupils to be 'confident, happy citizens' and, in all subjects, staff take opportunities to promote pupils' personal development and skills. They plan many opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. They work with other schools and organisations to give pupils experience of different environments and of working with new people. For example, the partnership with the Rose Bruford College helps to build pupils' confidence and resilience, as well as their independence.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' welfare is taken very seriously. Staff understand pupils' individual circumstances and the family support team works very effectively to provide support for pupils and their families. This helps pupils to become more confident and make good progress in their personal development and academic work.

- The work in PSHE, the skills for life programmes and the sensory work all strongly support pupils' personal development as they enable pupils and staff to explore different issues in a safe environment. Parents feel that their children are well supported and able to make good progress.
- Staff try to ensure that pupils have opportunities to be independent and learn to take responsibility. For example, younger pupils help within their classes. Older pupils have wider opportunities to take responsibility, for example on the school council or by working with younger pupils in performing arts and sports activities or in the local community. They take these responsibilities seriously.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school and are helped to learn how to stay safe outside school. Older pupils were able to talk about how they had been taught, for example, to cross roads safely, and also showed some understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is an orderly community. Behaviour in lessons is good and, if there is any poor behaviour, it is not allowed to disrupt the education of others. The number of pupils excluded has decreased.
- Pupils respond quickly to requests from staff and are generally polite and show respect for adults. They respond well to the systems for rewarding good work and behaviour. They are learning to manage their own behaviour and recognise, for example, when they might need some time out to calm down.
- Bullying is not seen as a major issue, but older pupils had some concerns about behaviour in the playground at lunchtime. The school is taking action to deal with this. The changes made to the organisation of the lunch hour and increased supervision are having a calming effect.
- Although attendance overall is still below the national average, the measures to improve it have had a very clear impact on persistent absentees. Their attendance has improved considerably and is now close to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' starting points are usually below – and quite often well below – what are typical for their age. They make good progress overall but particularly in developing their personal, social and emotional understanding and skills.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to communicate well. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are promoted across all classes and pupils are strongly encouraged to read. Pupils are encouraged to use their reading and mathematical skills well in different subjects, for example in construction, where following written instructions and accurate measurement are very important.
- The level of challenge and the outcomes for the most able pupils have improved but are still inconsistent. In some classes, expectations and outcomes are higher than in

others and this is reflected in the quality of work. Sometimes, too little appears to be expected of pupils and they are given too much help.

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress and almost all achieve at least the BTEC certificate in vocational courses, such as performing arts and construction. Pupils also do well in the entry level examinations in English and mathematics. These qualifications enable them to go on to higher-level qualifications at college.
- Pupils benefit from impartial careers education which helps them to choose the right college course or decide to stay on at school to take work-related courses. All pupils in key stage 4 move on to college or the school sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders manage the sixth form well and students have access to many opportunities both in and outside school. These help to prepare them well for the next phase of their lives. Students are encouraged to think for themselves and to show a sense of responsibility. Behaviour in the sixth form is good.
- Students in the sixth form follow courses in life skills which lead to recognised qualifications and provide a good basis for moving on to a full-time college course. Entry level and functional skills courses help students to improve their basic skills in literacy and numeracy and they are able to practise these in different situations.
- Life skills courses are taught well and, consequently, prepare students well for adult life. Teachers plan activities which will help students to acquire essential skills, for example in shopping, managing money and looking after themselves. Students are also encouraged to do work experience to help to prepare them for their future.
- Staff provide good support when students are making choices about their future. Students have opportunities to attend the local college one day a week to take vocational courses. This prepares them well for the future and helps them know the range of courses available to them when they leave school. The transition between school and college is very well managed and the vast majority of students are able to settle quickly and make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	101485
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10047384

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Saunders
Executive Headteacher	Madelaine Caplin
Telephone number	01322 350 123
Website	www.woodside.bexley-sch.uk
Email address	office@bwf.education
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2016

Information about this school

- Woodside is a special school for pupils who have EHC plans, mainly for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Some pupils have an EHC plan for moderate learning difficulties (MLD).
- The proportion of pupils who have ASD is increasing. In the primary phase, all pupils have ASD. In the secondary phase, there is a mix of ASD and pupils with MLD.
- The school has gone through significant change and is now part of the Belmont Woodside Federation. This is led by the executive headteacher and the federation governing body, which has representatives from both schools. A new head of school with specific responsibility for Woodside was appointed in September 2018. The school has had other changes in staff, including the appointment of a new head of mathematics. The governors are in the process of appointing a new deputy head of school.

- The school was previously on two sites but the Belvedere site has now been closed, and the school is using only the Colyers Lane site.
- About two thirds of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are from Black African, Caribbean and Asian backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium is well above average. The school also receives primary sports funding.
- The school uses alternative provision through its links with Bexley College. This enables pupils in Years 10 to 13 to attend vocational courses on a part-time basis. Older pupils can also undertake work experience.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons in all classes. Almost all observations were undertaken jointly with the principals or other senior staff.
- The team held meetings with governors, school leaders and staff. A telephone conversation was held with the assistant principal of Bexley College, who is responsible for the school-college links.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents before and after school and reviewed the responses from 19 parents who had completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors met and talked to pupils, both formally and informally. They looked at their work and the school's records of their progress.
- The team took into account 37 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- The team scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school, including those available on its website.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Shaun Dodds	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemary Keen	Ofsted Inspector

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