

Woodside School

Colyers Lane, Erith, Kent DA8 3PB

Inspection dates

17–18 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have not secured improvements for pupils since the last inspection.
- The school has experienced significant change since the last inspection. A number of leaders are new in post. As a result, systems aimed at improving the school and eliminating inconsistency have not embedded.
- Pupils' verbal skills develop more quickly than their writing. At the end of the primary phase in 2015, pupils' performance in writing was lower than in reading and mathematics. In the secondary phase, pupils made weaker progress in English than in mathematics and vocational subjects.
- Adults are not always aware of targets to support the specific learning and developmental needs of groups of pupils. Middle leaders and teachers rely on support from therapists to inform them of strategies to help pupils make progress.
- Outcomes for pupils currently at the school require improvement. The work in pupils' books does not show consistently strong progress over time. Rates of progress for groups of pupils, including those pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the most-able pupils, are variable.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Teachers' expectations and their use of assessment and questioning are not consistent. As a result, some pupils are not able to improve their work. Others, particularly the most-able pupils, are sometimes not challenged by work set for them.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes require improvement. Progress rates in English and mathematics are slower than in vocational subjects. Learners' attendance in the sixth form is lower than the school expects.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported across the school. As a result, their respect and tolerance towards each other ensure a calm and caring ethos. Pupils communicate well with adults and peers.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils are good and safeguarding is effective. Pupils typically behave well and enjoy coming to school. Close links with professional agencies and therapists provide good support to meet the needs of more vulnerable pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - high expectations of the school's work are consistent across all phases
 - middle leaders are more confident in checking the work of teachers
 - governors provide strong challenge in holding all leaders to account.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers check that pupils understand the written feedback in pupils' books
 - adults use assessment information and questioning to meet the needs of all groups of pupils
 - greater challenge is provided by teachers, particularly for the most-able pupils.

- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that all pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium and the most-able pupils, make good or better progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be considered to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Middle leaders and governors have not ensured that expectations are consistently high. For example, while teachers use assessment regularly, leaders have not checked that the feedback given to some groups of pupils enables them to make good progress. Therefore, the impact of work by leaders on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable.
- The interim executive headteacher is focused clearly on improving the quality of teaching and colleagues from the partner primary school support weaker teachers. However, the standard of teaching in some areas of the school remains too inconsistent.
- While effective action aimed at improving the school has taken place since the last inspection, the action has been slowed by changes in staffing. Leaders have not consistently challenged teachers to develop their professional skills. A new interim head of school has been recently appointed along with a special educational needs coordinator.
- Middle leaders are not secure in checking the quality of teaching. They do not have a clear enough understanding of assessment information to challenge teachers' practice. However, teachers are set appropriate targets aimed at improving their professional skills.
- Additional funding for lower-attaining pupils in Year 7 is used to provide an appropriate range of support. However, leaders and governors have not evaluated the effectiveness of this spending and therefore they do not know whether the progress made by these pupils has accelerated.
- Leaders check the use of the pupil premium. This additional funding has been successfully used to provide support for some individual pupils but not across all year groups. In some year groups, the gaps between the progress of those pupils eligible for the pupil premium and their peers are not narrowing as quickly as others. This is particularly true in key stage 4 and the sixth form, for those who have previously been eligible for the pupil premium.
- Since the last inspection, the evaluation of the school's work by leaders and governors has become more accurate. They now have a better understanding that outcomes for pupils should be higher. Senior leaders have identified the need to improve the progress of pupils across all phases. Consequently, a new curriculum has been introduced in the primary phase. It enables pupils to make more effective links between subjects, for example between reading, writing, mathematics, humanities, and personal, social, health and citizenship education. Pupils now study topics that develop their communication, reading and life skills. The primary curriculum includes the teaching of the application of the sounds letters make (phonics). The secondary curriculum is being re-evaluated. While the curriculum is broad and balanced, with a good range of vocational and academic subjects, it does not fully meet the needs of all students in key stages 4 and 5.
- The school strongly promotes the fundamental British values of respect, equality and tolerance. It nurtures carefully pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its close work with a range of therapists, which is a strength. The school council provides an effective democratic pupil voice. Its members have worked successfully to support charity fundraising and anti-bullying. Pupils are adequately prepared for their future lives in modern Britain through personal, social, health and citizenship education. A high proportion of pupils are taught to travel independently and to develop their wider life skills.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities successfully supports personal development. Pupils are able to access clubs including sports, performing arts, information communication technology, art and cooking. The primary sports premium is used very effectively to link the physical education curriculum with extra-curricular opportunities. For example, all pupils are set targets to achieve competence in swimming and competitive sport participation is encouraged for all groups of pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the last inspection, the governing body has not held leaders across the school strongly to account. Governors have not looked closely enough at the progress of groups of pupils. Consequently, they have not ensured sufficient improvement in teaching and good outcomes for pupils and learners.
 - Governors are carrying out their statutory duties. They know how additional funding is used, but are less clear about what impact it has on pupil outcomes.
 - The chair of the governing body has recently been appointed. The vice-chair, who is a national leader of governance, supports her adeptly. As a result, governors are clear in their view that pupils' progress

and outcomes need to improve. They regularly visit to acquire a firm understanding of the school's work. Furthermore, governors have started to ask probing questions of leaders.

- Governors have begun a consultation to establish a formal federation with Belmont Primary School. Consequently, a further restructure of the governing body is anticipated.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding governor has undertaken appropriate training and reviews the policies and procedures for safeguarding. Systems for securing the safety of pupils are supported by thorough policies and procedures. The single central record and arrangements for checking the suitability of staff to work with children meet requirements. The staff responsible for administering the checks are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff have received suitable training and understand themes such as the 'Prevent' duty and female genital mutilation. Leaders work closely with parents and carers regarding safeguarding issues. Any support required is well resourced so that help is swiftly received. Good links are maintained between professional agencies and the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Teachers' use of assessment is not consistent. In a range of books seen by inspectors, feedback from teachers did not support pupils to make consistently good progress. A number of pupils were unable to read the comments their teachers had made without adult support. Consequently, pupils did not always understand how to improve their work.
- In some classes, teachers' expectations of the standards pupils can achieve are not ambitious enough. For example, the most-able pupils are not challenged to extend their writing skills in vocational subjects in key stages 4 and 5. As a result, they do not have enough opportunities to consolidate their writing. Some most-able learners in the sixth form are not challenged sufficiently by the work set.
- In the primary phase, pupils are given varied opportunities to deepen and explore their understanding. While the pupils make progress in their reading and writing, sometimes careful checking of their learning fails to extend their skills in these areas. Some pupils were more secure in the use of number than adults perceived them to be. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were praised for demonstrating their counting skills when they could actually divide or add numbers with confidence. Similarly, adults do not consistently identify errors in letter formation. Often, they are unclear of wider specialist strategies to strengthen the progress pupils make.
- In contrast, pupils are well supported to develop their phonics skills and have access to apparatus and signs and symbols to help them learn. As a result, more pupils in the primary phase with speech, language and communication needs are making secure progress in their reading and talking. Pupils who read to inspectors were able to decode unknown words and use expression with some fluency.
- The teaching of communication skills is inconsistent in the secondary phase. In some classes visited by inspectors in key stage 3, questioning was not precise enough for pupils to understand the context of their learning. As a result, they could not progress their discussions about learning with their peers. However, in other classes visited in key stages 4 and 5, pupils were confident when discussing their ideas. They responded quickly to teachers' open and skilful questions and performed with empathy and self-awareness. This was particularly true in sport, performing arts and science.
- Teaching assistants attentively support the progress of pupils. A range of strategies and interventions are used successfully to support the needs of pupils. However, teaching assistants' knowledge of education, health and care targets and their use of assessment are less effective. For example, on some occasions staff do not push pupils on in their learning when they are ready to tackle more challenging concepts. This is particularly true of the 16 to 19 study programmes, where learners' evaluations in vocational subjects suggest they are capable of more challenging work. Adults do not check their evaluations carefully and, therefore, the work for some learners is not demanding enough.
- Pupils make stronger progress in those classes where planning is focused on the needs of pupils. Inspectors confirmed this by looking at pupils' books and visiting lessons. For example, in art, teachers' planning ensures that individual activities extend pupils' progress. Pupils make good progress because they successfully apply a good range of skills to their practical work. Furthermore, they were confident talking to inspectors about their work and understand the progress they are making.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school engages sensitively with external agencies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils.
- Education, health and care plans are reviewed for pupils and established links are in place to provide social care, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy support. Furthermore, an early intervention social worker is employed by the school to provide family support and parental advice.
- Pupils are confident that the school's work to keep them safe is effective. When talking with inspectors, they were very certain that any bullying is dealt with quickly and that it is not an issue in school. Inspectors agree with their view.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their child is happy, safe and well looked after at the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils during the inspection being resilient and respectful. They relate well to adults and understand how to be successful.
- Pupils and students benefit from professional careers advice and guidance to help make informed subject and career choices. As a result, they are closely supported when moving to the next stage of their education, training or employment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour around the school at both sites during the inspection was calm, and transitions between activities well managed.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average and few pupils fail to attend regularly. Attendance in the sixth form is not as strong as in the rest of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school during unstructured time is carefully managed. Supervisory staff have been trained to lead sports activities and a range of equipment is available for pupils to use at break and lunchtimes.
- The behaviour team meets regularly so that any issues that arise are well managed and responded to carefully. As a result, those groups of pupils who display behaviour that is more challenging are closely supported to make good improvements over time. Consequently, the number of exclusions has reduced.
- Learners in the sixth form behave positively. A number are successful in completing work experience with employers to develop their independence and life skills.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils currently in the school require improvement. Scrutiny of pupils' books does not show consistently good progress over time. While the school's information shows that pupils are making better progress in writing in the primary phase, this is not true across the school.
- The work in pupils' books seen by inspectors confirmed that progress in mathematics is often better than in English and other vocational subjects in the secondary phase. Furthermore, in some subjects, groups of pupils – particularly the most able – do not make enough progress. This is true in the vocational subjects, where work does not always challenge their understanding. Leaders have identified the need to increase the range of vocational opportunities that provide more challenge to these pupils.
- Reading and communication skills for pupils develop more quickly than writing skills. This is the case for all groups, including those with moderate learning difficulties and those pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Most pupils read appropriately in lessons and were able to do so with inspectors. However, the discussion skills of some pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are not always progressed as quickly as their peers because of inconsistent teaching.
- All groups of pupils who have additional special educational needs or disability continue to progress well in mathematics despite their varied starting points. In 2015, a higher proportion of pupils achieved GCSE success in mathematics than in English and science at the end of key stage 4. Similarly, at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics was stronger than their reading and writing.
- The current rate of progress of learners in the sixth form is not fast enough. The progress learners make in English has been slowed because learners followed inappropriately matched courses and as a result they did not achieve well.

- The progress made by pupils eligible for the pupil premium is inconsistent. Information provided by the school shows that those eligible for the pupil premium in some year groups are making better progress than their peers in writing. This is similar for some year groups in mathematics. However, while performance gaps between those pupils eligible for the pupil premium and their peers are closing quickly in the primary phase, they remain wider in the secondary phase in Years 10 and 11.
- All pupils who have additional special educational needs or disability are able to move on to their next stage of education successfully. Those who receive targeted therapy support for their behaviour make similar progress to their peers.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement. While this is the first year for learners to be on roll in both Year 12 and Year 13, the expectation of leaders has not been high enough in managing the study programmes. As a result, the rate of progress of those learners currently in the sixth form is below that seen in the rest of the school.
- The school's assessment information shows that, in Year 12, only around one in five learners have made good progress in mathematics and just under half have made good progress in Year 13. Learners' progress rates in English have been hindered because of inappropriately matched courses. The interim executive headteacher and the head of school have taken focused action to address this. All learners in the sixth form are currently on track to achieve their vocational qualifications.
- Sixth form leaders have not ensured that performance gaps between those learners previously identified as eligible for the pupil premium and their peers have significantly reduced. Consequently, those learners who are studying 16 to 19 study programmes who were eligible for the pupil premium do not make the good progress expected.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is less secure than at key stage 4. This is because, while teachers are familiar with the vocational curriculum, they have not used assessment information accurately enough to meet the needs of all learners, particularly the most able. However, broader opportunities are being developed for the most-able learners to study higher-level courses with other schools.
- The 16 to 19 study pathways are supported by effective impartial careers advice and guidance. The local authority provides targeted support for learners who are given useful and effective information to make informed careers and study choices. Furthermore, learners undertake visits to careers events and explore a range of future destinations in preparation for moving on. All learners are assisted to confirm college places or seek employment opportunities, including potential apprenticeships.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes include a balance of academic and vocational subjects. Work experience is undertaken with local employers and independent life skills are constructively supported. However, leaders are rightly evaluating the curriculum to ensure that it better meets the needs of all learners, particularly the most able.
- Learners in the sixth form behave well. They told inspectors that they feel safe and attendance is improving. However, it remains below the school's own target.
- The personal development and welfare of learners in the sixth form is well supported. Learners moving into the sixth form receive wide support from external agencies and the local authority. As a result, all of the learners in 2015 who were in Year 12 moved on successfully to Year 13.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures for learners on 16 to 19 study programmes are consistent with those being used successfully across the school. Consequently, safeguarding is effective in the sixth form.

School details

Unique reference number	101485
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10002018

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kara Webster
Headteacher	Ms Madelaine Caplin (interim executive)
Telephone number	01322 350123
Website	www.woodsideschool.org.uk
Email address	office@woodside.bexley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils from across Bexley who are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, for their moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils have a wide range of attainment when they enter the school.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2013. It has undergone significant change since the last inspection. The school has moved its main site from Halt Robin Road, Belvedere to Colyers Lane, Erith. The interim executive headteacher joined the school in January 2015. A new interim head of school has been recently appointed in April 2016, along with a special educational needs coordinator who joined the school in January 2016.
- Just over half of pupils also have additional autistic spectrum disorders.
- Just under half of pupils have moderate learning difficulties and a few others have severe learning difficulties.
- Most pupils are White British. A few are from African, Asian or Black Caribbean backgrounds and a small proportion speak English as an additional language. There are far more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding which supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- A proportion of pupils study vocational courses in the secondary school, including art, life skills, sports, food technology and construction.
- The school has recently developed a sixth form. Students on the 16 to 19 study programmes experience both academic and vocational courses, including literacy, numeracy and life skills.
- Catch-up funding and the primary sports premium are used to support pupils in school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 30 classes across all sites, age phases and subjects, where they looked at pupils' work in books and files, observed learning and considered the impact of teaching. Many classes were jointly visited with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also attended registration. They discussed learning with senior leaders and observed their feedback to staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with the interim executive headteacher, the head of school, senior and middle leaders, a range of staff, including support staff, and groups of pupils. Discussions took place with parents, the chair and vice-chair of the governing board and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including the work of pupils and students, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation and records relating to the quality of teaching and the management of teachers' performance. Inspectors also reviewed records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, and checked the school's records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account 16 parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils.

Inspection team

John Lamborn, lead inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Denise James-Mason

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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