

Woodlawn School

Drumoyne Gardens, West Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE25 9DL

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for Pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | 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

- The headteacher's strong and inspirational leadership has ensured that Woodlawn School has made rapid improvements. It now provides a good education for its pupils. She is ably supported by a cohesive team that is passionate about improving outcomes for its pupils. As a result of outstanding leadership, the school is improving at a pace.
- The curriculum is skilfully adapted to meet the needs and interests of all students. It successfully promotes their understanding of British values, preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders regularly check that the quality of teaching is of a high standard. They ensure that a good range of training opportunities extend teachers' skills. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Leaders are working to ensure that any low expectation in teaching is eliminated so that more pupils make the rapid and sustained progress of which they are capable.
- Behaviour in and around the school is outstanding. Pupils show awareness of the impact of their behaviours on others. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and respond very well to the school's rewards systems.
- The progress that pupils make is assessed well in English and mathematics. However, the new assessment system being developed by leaders is not yet able to support teachers to use the information to help them plan for the next steps in learning in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Students in key stage 4 and the sixth form are successful in a wide range of qualifications. They benefit from having access to work experience which is well suited to their needs, interests and abilities.
- School leaders are developing the curriculum and teaching in the sixth form to promote even better progress rates for all pupils, including the most able.
- School leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education or employment. Leaders work well with other providers and agencies in order to ensure that plans are in place for when pupils leave school.
- The school is very well supported by the local authority and held in high regard by parents.
- The school ensures that pupils are kept safe, and that the strong relationships with families and outside agencies support pupils beyond the school gates.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - eliminating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion of pupils make excellent progress from their starting points
 - strengthening teachers' use of assessment information so that planning meets individual pupil's needs more effectively in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Improve the effectiveness of 16 to 19 study programmes by:
 - continuing to refine the curriculum on offer in the sixth form so that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress, including the most able pupils in the cohort
 - ensuring that all courses on offer are delivered to a consistently high standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have provided the inspiration for all staff to combine their considerable skills and talents in the pursuit of excellence in the school's work. As a result, the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection have been fully addressed. This is now a good school.
- The headteacher, ably supported by her senior team, knows her school extremely well. She has an incisive understanding of the strengths of the school in addition to the areas that require further focus. As a result of this, improvement planning is top notch. She has galvanised her staff to work for the good of the pupils in her care. Not one stone is left unturned in the pursuit of excellence at Woodlawn. Consequently, the school is improving strongly.
- The school's curriculum is carefully designed to meet the needs of pupils, many of whom have significant barriers to their learning. As a result, pupils show enthusiasm for their learning. Within the school, there is a broad and balanced range of subjects. Equal opportunities are promoted well and all pupils have access to learning that they enjoy and find purposeful. All pupils leave school with some external accreditations because they benefit from effective and appropriate advice about their next steps.
- The school has excellent arrangements to promote British values within spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum. These are threaded through different subject areas. For example, through opportunities provided by the pastoral team, pupils learn to be tolerant when talking through conflicts or disagreements that they might have had in school. Partnerships with parents, other support agencies and, particularly, with other local schools are very strong. They lead to highly effective support for families and pupils as well as the sharing of best practices between schools. Some pupils benefit from working with other schools to complete specific accreditations.
- Leaders regularly check on pupils' attendance, especially those who have come to the school with low or even non-attendance in their previous schools. Leaders work effectively to promote attendance through effective communication with families, offering timely support when needed. Information about behaviour incidents and positive handling of pupils are meticulously recorded. Interventions are consistently successful in turning around pupils who have had significant challenges.
- Senior and middle leaders are effective and work extremely well together to develop subject areas. Their incisive self-evaluation of where improvements were needed led them to develop programmes which help to inspire pupils in school. For example, the school's 100-year celebration work, completed by pupils, culminated in a celebration day which was enjoyed by staff, visitors and pupils alike. As a result, there have been improvements in the quality of education that inspectors can clearly see. For example, teachers and support staff ensure that pupils practise and improve their literacy skills through intervention programmes.
- Teachers' planning takes account of the data gathered in school and a wealth of information about individual pupil's abilities so that they make good or better progress

from their starting points. Governors and leaders are now very well informed about the patterns and trends in student outcomes.

- School improvement planning is thorough and comprehensive. There are targets in place in the school improvement plan to measure the school's success. Governors are regularly informed of the targets and the progress being made to meet them. A strength of school leaders and members of the governing body is the value that they place on the continuous professional development of all staff. Consequently, staff feel valued and better prepared to meet the complex needs of all of the learners in school.
- One parent's comment typified that of many, saying, 'The leadership of the school is superb and clearly puts the needs of the children right at the centre of its ethos. Leaders display fantastic levels of empathy and emotional intelligence when dealing with parents, carers and the children, which promotes reciprocal respect and appreciation for what they do.'

Governance of the school

- Governance is a real strength of the school because of the passion, professional backgrounds, knowledge and skills possessed by governors. They are well organised into different areas of responsibility. They are well informed about the school's performance by comprehensive reports given by the headteacher, in meetings and by presentations given by staff members.
- Governors hold the headteacher and her staff to account very effectively. They ask pertinent, challenging questions about incidents which have occurred in school, or when making decisions about additional funding for agreed projects. They also ensure that staff are held to account for their classroom performance when confirming decisions about salary progression.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure and well monitored by a named safeguarding governor. This governor ensures that members keep up-to-date with safeguarding and safer recruitment training, for example.
- Governors ensure that school finances are purposefully used. For example, additional funding is used effectively to encourage pupils' participation in sport in the primary phase. Governors also keep close checks on pupil premium spending. They monitor the impact on outcomes for pupils who have received additional support in their reading and spelling, or who benefit from organised educational trips. They know that there are no apparent gaps in progress in mathematics and English between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- They have recently completed a governors' skills audit to identify further training needs. They attribute this to the timely and quality interventions which leaders have put in place, utilising the student premium funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The members of staff responsible for safeguarding have set about creating a culture where safeguarding permeates all aspects of the school's work. These leaders have

created highly efficient ways for members of staff to record and report concerns about the welfare of pupils. All staff know these procedures when reporting a concern, and they report all incidents diligently.

- The school's policies and procedures for safeguarding are comprehensive and take into account all recent guidance. This is also the case for risk assessments. Record-keeping and reporting in regard to multi-agency working are exemplary.
- Staff training around all aspects of safeguarding is of a very high quality, leading to staff being confident in this area of school life. They are fully informed on how to best keep children safe from harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most pupils at the school learn well because they benefit from consistently good teaching across the curriculum. The vast majority of teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and they pitch learning at a level that provides appropriate challenge. Pupils, therefore, make good progress as a result of teachers' careful planning of learning.
- A small amount of teaching does not reflect high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, the most able pupils sometimes make slightly slower progress than they are capable of because they are not challenged effectively.
- The majority of pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning. They work hard in lessons and are keen to do well. Lessons are purposeful and underpinned by very positive relationships between adults and pupils.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to assess pupils' level of understanding and to challenge pupils to think more deeply. Many pupils find communication very challenging and the adults in school use various carefully considered methods to develop pupils' communication skills. There is a focus on developing the skills that pupils will need to be successful in examinations in classes where pupils access external accreditations.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of the individual needs that each pupil has in relation to their learning, emotional literacy, communication skills and possible medical needs. Teachers skilfully use this understanding to develop engaging lessons that are accessible for all pupils.
- Teachers' knowledge about pupils' progress, however, is not yet as comprehensive as they and the headteacher would like it to be. School leaders are continuing to develop a new assessment system which they feel will better match their curriculum. They aim to help staff and governors to develop a deeper understanding of the progress of all children across the curriculum.
- Leaders and teachers are aware that these new systems require further development to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the progress being made, how this can be measured across the curriculum and how this information can help them to better plan the next steps in learning for each pupil.
- Teachers set regular homework for pupils. This homework generally reflects the individual and often complex needs of the pupils.

- Teaching assistants provide effective targeted support for those pupils identified as needing extra help. They work closely with teachers to agree on the best ways to support pupils, and they use strong subject knowledge to move pupils on in their learning. Pupils respond well to this support, and there is a consistent focus on helping all pupils to become resilient, independent learners. Particularly effective reading intervention programme work was observed during the inspection. This work was also reflected in the strong progress data shared with inspectors.
- Some teaching is strikingly effective. Here, teachers knit together their understanding of the needs of individual pupils and push them on in their learning effectively. Not all teaching is quite at this level. School leaders are aware of this inconsistency and are striving to make all teaching as good as the best found at school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils of all ages say that they feel safe in school. During arrivals at school, departures at the end of the day, travelling around school and during breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils behave very safely.
- Members of staff welcome pupils into school and pupils, in return, respond positively to the very welcoming environment. For pupils who can find coming into school challenging, or for those who have had a distressing or difficult morning, pastoral staff are on hand to talk through any concerns. These discussions support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because pupils are encouraged to join in discussions about taking responsibility for their actions or helping others.
- Pupils who are potentially vulnerable are particularly well looked after. They receive high levels of personalised support, and they form positive relationships with members of staff. The school works effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive specialist support when necessary. This is a school where pupils feel welcome and safe. Bullying is very rare at the school and pupils report that, when it does occur, it is dealt with fairly and decisively by members of staff.
- Leaders regularly seek pupils' views about school life. Questionnaire analysis shows that all pupils have positive attitudes and value the support provided by staff. This positive view becomes more noticeable the longer pupils remain at the school. Pupils interviewed said that they know that there are some pupils who display challenging behaviour, but pupils are confident that staff deal with any issues quickly and appropriately. Pupils can explain how to keep themselves safe in ways appropriate to their levels of understanding.
- Pupils' attendance is strong given the complex needs of pupils and the need for regular medical appointments or hospital admissions. There are many examples of the positive impact that school staff and other agencies have had on improving individual pupils' attendance. Parents spoken to said that the school does everything it can to work with families in support of improved attendance and behaviour, for example through communication with families and other agencies.

- Staff and pupils are committed to promoting equality. There is carefully considered teaching around sex and relationships. This sensitively takes into account the individual pupil's age and capacity for understanding. Tolerance and respect for different families and cultures permeates the school curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave impeccably in classrooms and when moving around the school. In lessons, their level of focus is impressive. They are committed to their learning and want to do their very best. They work well together and show the highest level of respect towards each other and towards members of staff.
- The staff and pupils have strong trusting relationships. Positive role modelling and focused programmes of work are helping pupils who find social communication challenging to develop the skills they will need in the future.
- The staff team is exceptionally skilled and sensitive to individual needs so that any incidents are managed swiftly and calmly. This ensures that the focus remains securely on the importance of learning and on attending lessons. Consequently, pupils rapidly improve their behaviour for learning soon after they come to the school.
- Pupils move about the school responsibly. Pupils of all ages were polite and engaging when speaking to the inspectors in school.
- Staff share information about pupils frequently. They refine their approaches and lesson plans to accommodate any individual needs. Pupils recognise that staff 'go the extra mile' to support them in their learning and behaviour.

Outcomes for Pupils

Good

- From their starting points, pupils make good progress overall, including in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' efforts in lessons and group work ensure they make good progress. In reading and communication lessons, for example, pupils were engaged and motivated to complete their tasks. Pupils knew exactly what it was that they had to achieve for each task. Their efforts were recorded so that the assessment of pupils' progress was instant. This kept them on task and ensured that their progress was good.
- Achievement in reading is good. Pupils make good progress with their reading skills during their time at the school as a result of effective support. School books are used well to encourage a love of reading. Those who find reading very difficult are supported well to make good progress. Pupils follow their interests when choosing their reading material.
- There is very little difference in the progress that different groups of pupils make. Inspection evidence, along with pupils' work, confirms that all groups of pupils are making at least good progress. For example, disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils achieve equally well over time. In addition, individual support is helping pupils who have the most complex needs to make very strong progress indeed.

- Some pupils work closely with different support staff, nurses, therapists or pastoral staff to achieve the best that they possibly can.
- By the time pupils reach the end of Year 11, they have made good progress during their time at school. Many pupils access some accreditation and a small number of pupils access GCSE courses. School leaders have ensured that effective transition arrangements are in place so that they continue to the next stage in their education in a seamless fashion.
- One parental comment reflected the feelings of many, saying that: 'The teaching and support staff show great amounts of energy, motivation and a will to ensure that all of the children succeed in whatever they are doing.'
- However, progress in some areas has not been in line with the expectations of the school leaders. The school has made efforts to address this by developing intervention programmes and offering support in specific areas of school. These timely responses to their own internal moderation systems has led to progress now being nearer to that expected by the school leaders.
- Over time, there is more variation in the outcomes for pupils within the secondary age pupils. The interventions put in place have reduced the variation and have led to consistently good progress. Further focus on the progress for the most able pupils in school is needed so that they can make more rapid and sustained progress over time.

Early years provision

Good

- The provision for children in Reception is effective and is led and managed well. This has a positive impact on how well children learn.
- Teaching is consistently good or better. As a result, children make consistently good progress in their learning. Staff plan a good range of imaginative and interesting activities both inside and outside the classroom environment. These activities reflect the needs of the children and promote independence when appropriate.
- Children arrive in the Nursery with very complex special educational needs. The adults in the setting gather a wealth of information to help them to assess the needs of each individual child. Using this information, they plan activities which help the children to make progress in all aspects of their learning.
- Children are very well cared for. Staff ensure that children are safe and that their behaviour is good. For those children who display behaviour which challenges, staff are skilful in promoting more positive behaviour choices. During the inspection, parents commented on how well the needs of their children are met.
- Children are keen to greet new adults to the area and displayed delight in the experiences on offer in the classroom
- When appropriate, staff teach children early reading skills effectively, and they are taught well. They provide highly imaginative teaching of letters and sounds to which children respond exceptionally well.
- The progress that children make in school is checked carefully to see if any additional support is needed and to build on the learning from earlier lessons.

- Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the assessment of their child. However, school leaders are developing ways to help families share a deeper involvement in information around developmental steps which could support the teachers to have a much clearer understanding of the child's progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The quality of provision in the sixth form is improving strongly. Leaders are fully aware of the strengths of the sixth form, in addition to the areas that require further focus. As a result of this incisive evaluation, plans for improvement are fit for purpose and of a good quality. The deputy headteacher, who is responsible for the sixth form, can already point to where the quality of education on offer has improved markedly since the time of the last inspection. Students receive a good standard of education in the sixth form at Woodlawn.
- School leaders have ensured that the curriculum on offer meets the needs of individual students more effectively than in the past. There have been changes to the courses that students follow in order to hone their literacy and numeracy skills, for example. Students' wider skills are developed through a focus on independent travel, sporting activities, or community projects.
- However, changes to the curriculum are relatively new. School leaders have plans to refine this as students progress through their courses. These refinements are intended to ensure that students get the most benefit from their time in sixth form. School leaders are aware that some aspects of the curriculum are delivered more effectively than others. Inspectors judge that, on occasion, higher attaining students could be pushed further in their learning.
- Teaching is characterised by positive relationships and a strong focus on learning between students and adults. Teachers are increasingly effective at spotting exactly what individual students understand and can do and plan for their next steps accordingly. Where learning is strongest, teachers capture the imagination of students while ensuring that they are challenged to make gains in their learning.
- Students are very proud of their school and have the greatest of faith in their teachers. They support one another and work well together. Students know the importance of keeping themselves healthy and know how to stay safe. For example, they understand the benefits and dangers of surfing online
- Students enjoy participating in community events and schemes. During the inspection, students were observed developing mosaic tiles and mobiles using recycled bottle tops in order to decorate a local community nursery. They talk animatedly about residential visits and the school prom. Students in the sixth form are punctual and attend school regularly.
- School leaders ensure that students are well prepared for the next stages in their education or employment. Leaders work well with other providers and agencies in order to ensure that plans are in place for when pupils leave school. Students have access to work experience which is well suited to their needs, interests and abilities. The sixth-form offer is compliant with the requirements of 16 to 19 study programmes.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 108652 |
| Local authority | North Tyneside |
| Inspection number | 10047877 |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Foundation special |
| Age range of Pupils | 2 to 18 |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of Pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of Pupils on the school roll | 105 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 19 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Hilary Harrison |
| Headteacher | Mrs Gill Wilson |
| Telephone number | 01916 432 590 |
| Website | http://www.woodlawn.org.uk |
| Email address | woodlawn@northtyneside.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 11–12 May 2016 |

Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with a range of special educational needs, including moderate learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical and medical disabilities and sensory impairments.
- All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan or are under assessment for a plan.
- A multi-disciplinary team, which includes speech and language, physiotherapy and health professionals is based at the school.

- The proportion of pupils looked after by local authorities and those supported by pupil premium is much higher than average. Most pupils are White British. A small proportion speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils are organised into class groups based on area of primary need and compatibility with their peers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors jointly observed learning throughout school with members of the school senior leadership team, including the observation of reading intervention sessions. This included early years and sixth-form classes.
- Pupils in Years 3, 8 and 11 read to an inspector.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, with members of the governing body, the school improvement partner and with two groups of pupils. Informal discussions were also held with staff and pupils around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct around school in lessons, at breaktimes and over lunchtime.
- Inspectors took into account the 36 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, as well as results from the school's own pupil survey. Questionnaires from 26 staff were considered.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents, including work in pupils' books and files, records of pupils' progress over time, attendance and behaviour records, records on the monitoring of teaching, reports to the governing body, governing body minutes, safeguarding information and information on the impact of pupil premium, sports funding and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Inspectors also scrutinised how leaders evaluate the schools effectiveness, their plans for improvement, and their important policies and procedures.
- Leaders also shared examples of different celebration days and events which have happened in and around school.

Inspection team

Catherine Garton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Wardle

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged Pupils' refers to those Pupils who attract government student 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. www.gov.uk/student-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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