

Caldecott Foundation School

Station Road, Ashford, TN25 6PW

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 make good progress in their writing skills or in their application of mathematical skills. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teaching is not consistently good, with weaknesses in some subjects in assessment and in how it is used to help plan challenging activities for all the pupils in lessons.
- A small minority of pupils occasionally disrupt lessons, which can slow the learning of other pupils. There are limited opportunities for pupils to show leadership or responsibility.
- Senior leaders, including the Board of Trustees, have identified key areas for improvement but the actions taken, particularly in relation to the performance management of staff, have not yet improved the progress of all pupils or the quality of teaching in all lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- A large majority of pupils improve their behaviour and attendance while at the school.
- There are areas of good teaching, especially in the primary age class and in subjects such as physical education.
- Pupils leave at the end of Year 11 with a range of qualifications that prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- The curriculum is enriched with a range of activities that pupils enjoy and value, for example the Life Skills programme.
- The Board of Trustees has deployed resources well, for example in the provision of the new vocational facilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons involving seven members of staff, including two joint observations with senior leaders. He conducted two learning walks with a focus on learning and behaviour. In addition, the inspector observed pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Education sub-committee of the Board of Trustees, senior leaders, including the Director of Operations, and with other staff. Discussions were held with pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority. The views of 23 staff who completed questionnaires were considered.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documentation, including the school's information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Timothy Feast, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Information about this school

- The large majority of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and all the pupils have been assessed as having highly challenging, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Sixth form students started in the school in September 2012.
- The large majority of pupils live in residential accommodation on site, which is inspected separately, and nearly all pupils are looked after by local authorities.
- The number of boys on roll is significantly larger than the number of girls.
- There have been a number of staff changes over the last year, including both senior and subject leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- During the current academic year, improve the quality of teaching to ensure all pupils, particularly in Years 9 to 11, make at least good progress by:
 - providing pupils, especially the older ones, with more opportunities to develop their writing skills and their application of mathematical skills
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information systematically in all subjects to plan activities which meet the differing needs of pupils in the class and accelerate the pace of learning
 - providing teachers with opportunities to see good or better practice in teaching and learning, both within the school and further afield.
- With immediate effect, improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring school leaders implement performance management procedures for staff systematically
 - using pupil progress data within lesson observations undertaken by leaders to help evaluate the quality of teaching over time and to set teachers appropriately challenging targets
 - checking that teachers fully comply with agreed procedures to provide senior leaders with assessment information for all pupils on a termly basis.
- With immediate effect, improve the behaviour of pupils by:
 - ensuring school leaders provide pupils with greater opportunities to exercise roles of responsibility and leadership
 - staff planning activities in and out of lessons which engage and motivate those who are still disaffected.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Not all pupils make consistently good progress, especially those in Years 9, 10 and 11, and this is reflected in their slower progress in improving their writing and applying their mathematical skills to real-life problems. This is because they are not given sufficient opportunities to practise these skills.
- When asked to write or to tackle mathematical problems, pupils often receive too much support from adults or do not get round to these more challenging activities in lessons.
- Elsewhere in the school, the majority of pupils, both boys and girls, make good progress, exceeding that expected nationally and gain a wide range of externally accredited courses by the end of Year 11. Progress is particularly good for primary-aged pupils.
- Pupils generally make good progress with their reading. They confidently read their worksheets or work on the board. Pupils who were heard to read talked assuredly about the plot of a story and used appropriate strategies to tackle words they found difficult. Pupils' progress with their speaking and listening is good but they find writing more difficult, particularly independently.
- Pupils make good progress with their number work, especially in mathematics, but are less confident when applying these skills to unfamiliar situations.
- The good care and support staff provide for the pupils and the good relationships they have with them help nearly all pupils to improve their attitudes to learning. This is reflected in their better behaviour and attendance.
- Students in the new sixth form benefit from the focus on accredited vocational courses and they have made a good start to their studies, for example, in understanding the reasons for using different extinguishers when confronted by a fire in a hair and beauty salon.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next stage of education. Particularly good use is made of the time after public examinations through a discrete Life Skills programme, which contributes to pupils' wider understanding of the area they live in and the services that support them.
- Pupils are often proud of the progress they have made. A sixth former commented particularly on how proud her family was of her progress and that she was now doing vocational courses, both at the school and at a college of further education.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in lessons. Teachers do not use assessment information systematically to plan work to meet the differing needs of pupils in their classes. Too often, all pupils do the same task regardless of their ability.
- Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to write independently, nor to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum, for example when measuring lengths of wood for cutting in construction.
- Teachers do not make good enough use of best practice in teaching and learning, both within the school itself and in schools further afield, to improve their own practice.
- Teachers do not always plan different work for the range of ages and abilities in each class and similar work for all the pupils is found in their books. There are some good examples of teachers planning well to meet the differing needs, for example, in the mathematics books and the lessons in the primary class, where the youngest pupils have considerably different tasks from the oldest pupils.
- Work in books is marked regularly and positive comments provided. Less evident are comments that guide pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. In discussions, pupils were unsure of the next steps they had to take to make improvements.
- There are examples of good teaching across the school and this was evident in many of the lessons. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and help pupils to learn successfully. Staff

use behaviour management strategies consistently and, as a result, in most lessons pupils are engaged and remain on task.

- In the most effective teaching, teachers plan activities that enthuse the pupils and enable them to demonstrate good progress. For example, in a physical education lesson the teacher focused on pupils improving their passing skills in hockey with an emphasis on pupils moving into space. The result was a demonstrable improvement in the quality of the competitive game being played and much enjoyment on the part of all the players.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- A small minority of pupils do not behave well enough in lessons and around the site. This is because the problems they have when they come to the school have not been fully resolved and the activities do not always engage them. Nevertheless, during their time at school, the behaviour of most pupils in lessons and over time improves.
- Pupils say that their own behaviour has improved while they have been at the school and that behaviour generally is better. Exclusions over the last two years have been rare.
- Pupils' attendance usually improves once they have started at the school but attendance is still below national figures. The residential houses do not provide an explanation initially for many of the absences but school leaders follow up these absences systematically.
- Pupils comment that there is bullying in the school but that it is dealt with effectively by staff. They are able to distinguish between the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They all indicated that there were adults they could turn to if they needed help or advice.
- Pupils say they feel safe and show that they know how to respond to unsafe situations. Extensive work is done through the curriculum and other activities to explain about harmful substances and to promote respect and good manners.
- Opportunities are missed for pupils, especially older pupils, to show responsibility, for example, in the dining hall or as learning mentors to younger pupils. However, the pupils who shared lunch with the inspector were not only well mannered but responded positively to the opportunity to talk about their school and their aspirations. They were able to provide evidence that the school's work contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- School leaders have not implemented performance management arrangements consistently in recent months, mainly because of the staffing changes over the last 18 months. Where lesson observations have been undertaken, not enough attention has been paid to pupils' progress both in the lesson and over time when making a judgement about the quality of teaching.
- Although the tracking of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection, not all staff provide school leaders with timely updates as the school's assessment policy requires.
- Senior leaders, including trustees, have brought about improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum has been improved; for example, the range of vocational courses has been extended and pupils have welcomed this practical focus. This year, sixth form students have started at the school, reflecting the foundation's commitment to improving opportunities for older pupils.
- Together with the trustees, school leaders have a clear vision for improvement, especially in raising expectations of pupils' performance and comparing their outcomes with those nationally. Leaders' approach to pupils' academic and personal improvement takes into account the whole individual and as a result, the foundation's overall provision contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's development plan is based on an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and

areas for development, although there is insufficient emphasis in the ways that success will be measured on pupils' progress and improving the proportion of good and better teaching.

- Leaders have undertaken observations of teaching, but not of all staff. These observations show improved teaching by those still employed by the school. Trustees have challenged school leaders to implement performance management for staff more systematically, to ensure that all teachers are observed. Training and development opportunities have been identified from the observations already undertaken, both in-house and further afield, but not all staff have engaged with these opportunities, thus limiting their impact.
 - New subject leaders have recently been appointed for English, mathematics and science. Their subject expertise is reflected in the school's strengthened priorities for improving pupils' progress, especially in areas that previously have been weaker and in the quality of teaching in these core subjects, particularly in Years 9 to 11.
 - However, all the staffing changes have meant that some developments have not been as fast as the trustees and senior leaders have wanted. Newly appointed school leaders have begun to have an impact and this, combined with the collective focus of the whole team on bringing about improvement, supports their school's capacity to improve further.
 - The local authority provides light touch support to this non-maintained school through offering useful professional development opportunities. The school has taken advantage of these opportunities, for example in relation to safeguarding and as a result the foundation has maintained high standards in this area.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - provides good supervision of the school's finances and the effective allocation of funding, for example, to provide vocational facilities that extend the curriculum opportunities for students
 - has ensured that safeguarding requirements are met and that a culture of safety is of paramount importance to all who work, study or visit the site
 - provides challenge and support to school leaders and holds them to account when procedures are not sufficiently systematic, but still requires improvement in ensuring the effective implementation of performance management of education staff.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119027
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	401797

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	8–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	3
Appropriate authority	The proprietor
Chair	Angus Fraser
Headteacher	Sharon McDermott
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 July 2010
Telephone number	01303 815665
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