

# Woodlands School

Beechdale Road, Aspley, Nottingham NG8 3EZ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The strong leadership of the head of school supported by the executive headteacher has created a clear vision and direction in driving the school forward. Staff share their strong commitment to providing a high-quality education for all pupils in their care.
- The governing body provides effective support and challenge to the school. Governors have the capacity and are committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve.
- Senior leaders regularly make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils' interest is engaged and lessons are stimulating. This has led to consistently good and improving teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, other pupils.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. They have very positive attitudes to learning and show great consideration for each other and staff.
- The range of subjects provides good opportunities for pupils' personal and academic development in all key stages. Older pupils are well prepared to take the next steps to college by gaining valuable skills from work experience placements.
- Pupils feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. Safeguarding arrangements are very effective.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some subject leaders are new to their roles and as yet it is too soon to judge the impact of their initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils do not always receive the effective advice on improving their work that is prescribed in the school's marking policy.
- Not all teachers plan learning activities which take into account the speech, language and communication difficulties which challenge some pupils, in particular those who have recently joined the school.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the role of subject leaders so that they are more directly involved in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
  
- Improve teaching and learning so that all pupils make outstanding progress by ensuring that:
  - teachers plan activities that are set at the right level to ensure that the individual needs of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties are fully met
  - all staff consistently follow the school's marking policy to show pupils how to improve.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The head of school provides strong leadership which has been strengthened through working together with the visionary and highly skilled executive headteacher. This has led to consistent improvements in all aspects of the school's work. They have set clear, high standards for all staff and ensured that they meet them. Their determination to achieve the very best for all pupils has transformed the school's effectiveness.
- Senior leaders now have a significant impact on consistently improving the quality of teaching. They lead by example and provide highly effective challenge and support for teachers. They provide appropriate training for teachers and their assistants, which is very much valued by staff.
- The major areas for improvement in teaching identified at the last inspection have been addressed. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated. Leaders have planned training to support staff understanding of the needs of pupils with complex speech, language and communication difficulties, who have very recently joined the school.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness are accurate and have identified the right actions to make the necessary improvements. They have a clear and purposeful vision for improving the school further so that pupils continue to make improving progress.
- Leaders track pupils' achievement with rigour and accuracy. This has played a key role in improving teaching, the curriculum and pupils' outcomes.
- The rich range of subjects and activities meets pupils' needs well. For example, in addition to developing their communication and mathematical skills effectively, pupils also have opportunities to swim regularly, play other sports such as cricket and visit a local gym. Leaders' use of the primary school physical education and sport premium for eligible pupils is effective and many have achieved awards. Sports coaches have been used to increase staff skills. As a result, pupils' participation and fitness have improved.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take part in exciting activities, which have included cultural visits to the Nottingham Contemporary art gallery and the pantomime at Nottingham Playhouse. They have also extended their science experience through working in the laboratory at Nottingham University and handling exotic animals at Zoo Lab. In addition, they have joined Oak Field, a partner school, for a science day, which has resulted in them learning new skills and using new equipment.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to socialise across age groups at break and lunchtimes and during the final part of the school day after completion of work when they choose their activity. This helps them to gain self-confidence and make new friends.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. It is interwoven through all aspects of learning, including assemblies. Pupils learn about right and wrong, and develop the 'Woodlands qualities' of independence, resilience, adaptability, challenge and self-confidence, which can be seen in lessons. Pupils learn about the differences between people from a range of backgrounds and beliefs, for example through their celebrations of different faiths throughout the year. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, through the democratically elected school council pupils have brought about significant changes to school lunches by working with the local authority to change the menus.
- Leaders' checks on teachers' performance are thorough and regular. Teachers are held to account for the progress of the pupils they teach. They receive clear feedback about what they could do to improve, which leaders follow up in the next observations. Leaders have not yet established rigorous performance management for all teaching assistants. As a result, some are not clear about how to help pupils with their learning and the next steps they need to take.
- The role of middle and subject leaders is not fully established. Therefore not all leaders are having an impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The strong achievement of disadvantaged pupils demonstrates that leaders spend pupil premium funding effectively on a range of activities and strategies to support their learning. Importantly, they receive increased support in lessons and they have access to the full range of activities offered by the school.
- Leaders have made effective use of the support from Her Majesty's Inspectors during monitoring visits and that offered by the local authority. They have gained skills and knowledge through working with the executive headteacher and federation partner school, Westbury, together with leaders in the Transform

Teaching School Alliance, including Oak Field School. The impact has been to successfully improve the quality of teaching through the training, coaching and mentoring they have received.

- Leaders ensure that teachers and family support workers engage regularly with parents, carers and those working with the pupils' families to protect pupils from harm and support their needs.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance has developed as the school has improved. Governors fulfil all statutory duties and are closely involved in providing valuable support and challenge to the schools' senior leaders. They fully understand how the school has improved and what needs to be done.
  - The governance ensures that performance management arrangements are effective and that salary progression is based on merit and underperformance is tackled. Governors know how the school uses the sports and pupil premium funding and the positive difference this makes to pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policy and regular checks demonstrate that those with responsibility and all other adults understand the needs of pupils and work intensively with families. The school responds quickly and appropriately when pupils are at risk. Leaders persistently pursue high-quality support and advice about the safety of pupils. Pupils are taught well and consistently about how to stay safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Following the lead of the head of school and executive headteacher the staff have worked with great commitment to improve since the last inspection. Teaching over time has therefore improved, and is now good.
- Most teachers have a clear understanding of each pupil's needs. However, not all teachers plan activities that are set at the right level to ensure that the individual needs of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties are fully met. As a result, they do not make as much progress as they are capable of.
- Classrooms are happy places where pupils enjoy positive relationships between themselves and adults. Displays are effectively used to support learning and show pupils' work. Pupils are interested in their work, happy to 'have a go' even if they get it wrong and are proud of what they do. Their books are neat and they are respectful of each other's efforts.
- Teachers check pupils' work regularly. However, not all teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy. As a result, not all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' judgements are accurate by making regular checks on pupils' work and comparing with pupils' work in partner schools.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the quality of teaching and appreciate the time that teachers take to inform them about how well their children are doing, as well as to discuss any concerns.
- Resources such as signs and symbols are not being used and opportunities to develop language skills, knowledge and understanding are therefore missed.

## 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 is a warm and welcoming place. Staff make pupils' safety and well-being a priority. They care for pupils greatly. Pupils are kept safe, including when they use equipment, resources and modern technologies, such as laptops and smartphones. Staff work closely with parents and carers, who feel their children are very well cared for at school. Leaders carefully monitor the arrangements for pupils to travel safely to and from school to make sure they are safe.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in real life situations and develop independence, for example a number of older pupils are able to travel on their own, to and from school on the bus. Talks from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and a police community support officer have covered topics such as pupils' rights to say no and protect themselves, and the rule of law.
- Staff liaise closely with a range of agencies, including health and social care professionals, to make sure pupils' medical, physical, emotional and social needs are met effectively. Parents say that staff, including

the family support workers, 'go the extra mile' when there are difficulties, for example when an anxious child is struggling to come to school, with support being given to the whole family. They value this very much, as it ensures that their child does not miss lessons and fall behind with their learning.

- Pupils' skills in working and socialising with others in school are developed effectively. They have frequent opportunities within the curriculum to make choices, take turns, lead an activity and play a full part in their learning. They enjoy regular visits from Scooby the school dog, who they are able to look after. As a result, their confidence and self-awareness develops over time.
- Pupils engage enthusiastically in fundraising activities throughout the year and take part in charity work such as their regular trips to help out at the food bank, and raising money for Children in Need.
- Most pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. On arrival at school in the morning they engage readily with the staff who greet them. Some pupils have periods of physical or mental illness or medical conditions which mean that they are unavoidably absent, sometimes for extended periods of time. In the past a number of unauthorised absences have impacted on the whole-school attendance. This issue has been tackled well by the attendance officer and leaders to ensure that attendance overall is improving. Where there are difficulties, support is put in place for the pupil and their family, and as a result unauthorised absence is dealt with quickly.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons because expectations are high and they enjoy their lessons.
- They move around the school sensibly and safely and although the adults are never far away, many are able to do this independently.
- They play enthusiastically and energetically at break and lunchtime, with a good level of supervision provided by staff. Pupils enjoy their food in the well-designed dining hall. This also provides opportunities to chat socially for many pupils.
- Pupils with challenging behaviour have individual management plans which are used effectively to deal with the behaviour and support the pupil to move on. The whole-school behaviour policy is used consistently and the reflection rooms are used well, enabling pupils to learn over time to manage their own feelings and behaviour.
- Teachers and their assistants are very skilled in using praise and encouragement to help pupils to keep trying hard. Pupils understand what is expected of them and they understand consequences when they are needed.
- Records show incidents of poor behaviour are tackled promptly and effectively and the number of serious incidents is reducing. Staff are becoming more effective in analysing this information to help plan next steps for individual pupils. Parents, pupils and staff agree that they know who to speak to if an incident of bullying occurs but say this does not happen often at Woodlands.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- Pupils make good progress across the school. While some pupils make even more rapid progress and achieve very well, a minority do not make expected progress. Teachers make regular checks on progress and therefore identify ways to improve the achievement of those pupils who make slower progress.
- Pupils make good progress across the curriculum, including with their literacy, phonics and mathematical skills. Pupils, including some who have recently joined the school, enter with speech, language and communication difficulties or with challenges in developing their reading and writing skills, and teachers and their assistants are assessing pupils' progress on individual programmes which are designed to personalise and accelerate their learning. This is less effective for some pupils who have very recently arrived in school.
- Pupils' work shows that they apply themselves well and make good efforts to succeed. Over time, most pupils make good progress. There is not, however, a whole-school approach to feedback and marking that pupils can understand as they move through the key stages.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as, and often better than, other pupils in the school.
- Similarly, disadvantaged pupils and those who are looked after make very good progress; there are no gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils in the school. This includes when attending offsite training. This is because of the focused support the school provides for these pupils.

- Pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and are prepared well for the next stage of their development. Parents rightly feel that their children make good progress and that they are kept up to date about their children's achievement. Typically they move onto New College Nottingham, Bluecoat Academy, Oak Field School and Nethergate School.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122962
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham City
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008114

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Burnett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Barker (Headteacher) John Dyson (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Telephone number</b>	01159 155734
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woodlandssch.co.uk">www.woodlandssch.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:headteacher@woodlands.nottingham.sch.uk">headteacher@woodlands.nottingham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 January 2014

## Information about this school

- This is a special school for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. A small number of pupils have severe learning difficulties. Since September 2015, a growing number of pupils with complex needs including speech, language and communication difficulties and medical issues have joined the school.
- The school population has increased by 19 pupils this academic year. There are plans for more pupils to be admitted shortly. The increase has mostly been at Key Stage 3 and primary, where the number of classes has increased to five. The school now has similar numbers of pupils and class groups in both primary and secondary, with the higher level of need being in the younger groups.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes. The youngest pupil at the time of the inspection was in the Reception class but had only been in school for a week, having been very recently and unexpectedly referred to the school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is well above average.
- All pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils attend the school from across the city of Nottingham. The majority of pupils are from White British communities.
- The school is part of the Westbury Woodlands Federation. There is a single governing body for Westbury School and Woodlands School. The executive headteacher, who is a national leader of education, provides excellent leadership to the school and works closely with the head of school and her senior team. The school is a member of the Transform Teaching School Alliance.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are given a variety of opportunities to undertake different courses, including work experience, and one pupil attends the Nisai Hub alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons across all key stages, many of them jointly with the head of school. They also carried out learning walks and heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with the head of school, executive headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the attendance officer, governors and two local authority advisors who work with the school.
- Telephone conversations were held with parents, the manager of a children's home and the teacher from the alternative provision Nisai Hub.
- A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised, including safeguarding processes and records, and information about pupils' achievement, including the results of examinations and other qualifications. Inspectors also analysed records of leaders' checks on teachers' performance, governors' minutes, attendance and behaviour records and incident logs and the school self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of pupils' work in their books and folders as well as the displays around school. Pupils' behaviour was observed in the morning and at home time, in lessons, at break and lunchtime and generally around the school.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for any meaningful analysis to be completed. Inspectors considered parents' responses to the school's own questionnaire, alongside comments from parents who spoke to an inspector on the phone.
- Evidence from previous monitoring inspections and the two local authority advisors' reports were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Lynda Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Linda Lyn-Cook

Ofsted Inspector

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