

Wilsthorpe Community School

Derby Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG10 4WT

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's determined leadership inspires trust and confidence in the whole school community. Leaders and managers have taken determined action in response to the previous inspection and successfully brought about rapid improvements.
- Pupils are now making good progress across many subjects and across all year groups. School improvement has been quick.
- Governors are highly effective in supporting and challenging school leaders. They are a highly skilled team and know the school very well.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have risen as a result of a collective focus by all leaders, governors and teachers on this group of pupils.
- The progress of pupils at GCSE level in both English and mathematics is above that seen nationally.
- A clear set of strong community values underpins the school. The good relationships between pupils and adults are key to this success.
- Safeguarding is excellent and a strength of the school.
- The sixth form is now good. Leaders have been decisive and teaching and standards are rising.
- The curriculum is highly effective and provides good opportunities for pupils to be successful and make progress after they leave school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site and at breaktimes.
- Teachers enthuse pupils with their passion for teaching. They use their excellent subject knowledge to help most pupils to succeed in their subjects.
- The school rightly identifies the need to embed opportunities for independent learning so that pupils make even better progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding by:
 - continuing to develop strategies for independent learning, so that all pupils can make even better progress
 - developing further the opportunities for teachers to share best practice with each other.
- Improve the attendance of key groups, particularly mid-year admissions, so that it matches that of other groups in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The school's leaders are a determined and ambitious team. They have been relentless in their determination to improve the areas identified in the previous report. The changes in leadership at all levels have increased the rate of improvement.
- The headteacher is liked and respected by staff, pupils and parents. His strong community values inform the school's work.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed a strong system to track the progress of pupils across the school. This has allowed them to take appropriate action to address any relative weaknesses, such as in science.
- The high expectations leaders set for staff are clearly communicated in the plans that have been drawn up to further improve the school. The range of opportunities available for professional development are valued by teachers. The strong emphasis leaders place on discussing teaching in strategies such as the 'Learning Clinic' has helped raise standards.
- Leaders at all levels have a clear sense of the school's priorities and are motivated by the challenge of ensuring all pupils can do their best. Middle leadership has significantly improved since the last inspection. Middle leaders now have a very positive impact on the areas they lead. They are very positive about the direction senior leaders set for them and enjoy the opportunities to develop their teams.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' performance is well managed. Procedures have been tightened and teachers' targets and professional development are linked effectively to the school's action plan and to expectations for progress. The school links teachers' pay progression closely to successful performance. Overall, teachers are held to account, and underperformance is challenged effectively.
- Leaders have taken strong and effective action to address the recent influx of older mid-year admissions. Many of these pupils had struggled in their previous schools, but most are now making rapid gains. The curriculum has also been developed to support them. While some of the group's attendance is still low, leaders' close monitoring is having an impact on these reluctant attenders to encourage them to come to school more often.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs enhances pupils' experiences. Pupils take part in sporting, artistic and cultural activities. Some younger pupils go into a local junior school to support reading.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and personalised to meet pupils' needs well. This includes courses for individual pupils in order to follow their desired careers paths. Courses on offer are regularly reviewed and changes are made to help pupils maximise the progress they make. For example, very high numbers of pupils who complete the motor vehicle course go on to secure full-time jobs.
- Careers advice and guidance is strong in the school. All students are involved in university visits, beginning in Year 7.
- Staff morale is very good and pupils appreciate the positive changes to their school.

Responses to the staff and parent questionnaires show that they recognise and support leaders' actions. As one parent said, 'My kids feel positive and enthusiastic not only about their lessons, but also about the fantastic range of extra-curricular activities on offer'.

- Leaders' actions to improve attendance and exclusion rates for most groups of pupils have been effective.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Events, including assemblies and visiting speakers, extend this aspect of the pupils' education well. For example, pupils learned about migration recently through activities in tutor time. A range of well-planned activities ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's personal, social and health education programme underpins pupils' good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and emotional and mental well-being.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear vision for the school and have worked very effectively with school leaders to address the areas from the previous inspection.
- Governors are very successful at holding leaders to account for the performance of the school. Through leaders' reports to governors they provide an accurate breakdown of the pupils' progress throughout the school.
- A very close check is kept on how leaders spend and account for the use of the pupil premium funding. Governors regularly meet subject leaders and this has helped them to improve outcomes for pupils eligible for support through the funding.
- Governors have undergone very thorough training in safeguarding. They use their own expertise in this field to ensure that this aspect of the school's work is effective.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture in the school that leaders have created so that pupils feel comfortable in sharing concerns. Staff receive regular training and they fully understand their role in recognising and reporting any signs of distress. Leaders are proactive in seeking advice from external agencies when they have concerns. Pupils who spoke to inspectors confirmed that they feel safe at school, a view shared by their parents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because there are rigorous systems that staff implement consistently. Policies are up to date and reviewed regularly. There is a very strong culture of vigilance across the school. Staff receive regular training to ensure they understand their roles with regard to safeguarding children, including protecting them from the risk of extremism and child sexual exploitation. Governors have received safeguarding training and are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across a range of subjects has improved significantly since the last inspection. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent, as are pupils' attitudes to learning. Teachers create an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in the classroom and enable pupils to thrive and make

good progress.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and most teachers plan lessons which expect a lot of the pupils, whatever their ability. Effective questioning establishes whether pupils have understood new work or if they need further help.
- The accurate and comprehensive tracking system clearly shows the progress that individuals and groups of pupils are making currently. It quickly identifies those who are not making enough progress and triggers extra support to enable them to catch up. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of the quality of work they wish to see. For example, by the use of perceptive questioning, a teacher encouraged pupils to deepen their explanations. All pupils, particularly the most able, benefit from this.
- Leaders have introduced strong new systems in science. Pupils' performance and the quality of teaching were judged as weaknesses at the previous inspection. Now, the work in pupils' books is of a high standard as a result of the much-improved teaching in this subject.
- There is a strong culture of reading at this school. Younger pupils spoke about how much they have improved their reading since they started at the school.
- As required by the school's marking and assessment policy, teachers give pupils time to check and improve their work. This means that they can learn from their mistakes and also from each other through discussions and peer marking.
- Pupils' speaking skills are a significant strength of the school. This is because leaders have ensured all staff are well trained in literacy and that teachers encourage pupils to articulate their thoughts and ideas confidently and clearly.
- Occasionally, in some lessons, some pupils can lose focus when teachers do not set work that is closely matched to their abilities.
- School leaders identified the need for teachers to plan for more opportunities for pupils to learn independently. Inspectors also found this to be the case when visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is very good. Staff are very effective at spotting any child who is at risk or potentially vulnerable and supporting them when appropriate, with the help of outside agencies. Pupils know that there is a large team to support them if they need any help.
- There is a very strong culture at the school that keeps pupils safe. One older pupil described this as 'like being part of a caring family'.
- Pupils feel safe at school and are taught how to keep themselves safe. A high priority is given to regularly repeating important messages about the risks of, for example, extremist views. Pupils appreciate the information they frequently receive from school about this and other potential risks to their safety.

- Pupils receive good careers education, information, advice and guidance. The school gives a high priority to making sure key stage 3 pupils have high aspirations. It provides many opportunities to have experiences which will help guide their choices for key stage 4 and key stage 5. The number of pupils who are not in education, employment or training after they leave school is low.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move around the school sensibly and behave well at breaktimes. They are helpful to each other and very polite to visitors and staff. Relationships with staff are open, warm and friendly. There is no litter around the site.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and improving. Pupils are interested and keen in their learning and only when teaching is not as strong do pupils lose focus on their learning.
- Attendance is also good. It is above the national average for most pupils and the number of pupils who are absent for a long time is reducing. While the attendance for disadvantaged pupils has improved since the last inspection, there are some groups where it has not yet done so quickly.
- Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions has reduced. The school works hard to identify those at risk of exclusion and supports them.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Achievement in all year groups across the school has improved rapidly because of good teaching. Leaders have made this a priority and, as a result, current pupils are making good progress overall. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' books supports this judgement. The improvements in overall GCSE outcomes in 2016 look set to continue based on the school's own assessment information and other first-hand inspection evidence.
- The overall progress that pupils made in eight of their GCSEs in 2016 was above average. The proportion of pupils who achieve grades A* to C in both English and mathematics at key stage 4 is high and is a strength of the school.
- Effective support enables pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make progress that is at least in line with their peers.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 improved significantly in 2016 compared to 2015. The proportion of these pupils who achieved a GCSE in both English and mathematics has increased. Leaders and teachers have a clear focus, and improvements in these pupils' attendance have helped to accelerate the progress they make. Pupils entering the school with below-average standards in English and mathematics are supported well with the Year 7 catch-up funding. High-quality support from teachers and teaching assistants, in a well-planned nurture group, is helping these pupils catch up quickly.
- The school promotes reading well for all pupils. There is now a strong focus on improving all pupils' literacy skills throughout the school. All new staff receive a literacy induction programme that supports this consistently.
- Improved leadership and teaching has resulted in improved GCSE outcomes in nearly

all subjects, especially in history, geography, Spanish, sports studies and science.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are effective because leaders have a clear vision for the sixth form. Improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and the range of courses offered. Systems that have brought improvements in the main school are now being implemented in the sixth form.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are good overall. A-level grades have improved rapidly and are above national averages. In 2015, students studying vocational programmes made good progress. The latest school information confirms that this has improved in 2016.
- Students show very good attitudes to learning and speak positively about the support and guidance they receive. Students value the opportunities that exist to be involved in supporting younger pupils and to take on leadership roles, for example as mentors. They are positive about fundraising for local and national charities.
- The curriculum prepares students well for the next steps in their learning journey. A range of non-qualification activities contribute well to students' personal development and well-being. The enrichment programme has been improved to meet the needs of students fully, so that they know how to stay safe and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The small number of students entering the sixth form without good passes in mathematics and English are well supported and achieve well in resit examinations, ensuring that they catch up with these required qualifications.
- Overall, the school meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme. Opportunities are in place to develop students' understanding of the world of work and students are well supported with work experience opportunities and how to move on to university courses.
- Higher expectations for attendance, punctuality, behaviour and dress code have resulted in good attendance. The school attributes the strong retention rates to this stronger culture.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form because teachers are vigilant and appropriate systems are followed consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	112935
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10019544

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	829
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Ashley
Headteacher	Jonathan Crofts
Telephone number	0115 972 9421
Website	www.wilsthorne.derbyshire.sch.uk/
Email address	info@wilsthorne.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a smaller than average sized mixed secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- There are no pupils attending off-site alternative provision.

- In 2015 and in 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 4 and the interim standards for 16 to 19 study programmes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to 32 lessons. Many of these were observed jointly with the headteacher and other senior leaders. In addition, inspectors visited tutor time.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, those teachers new to the school, the special educational needs coordinator, the leader of the 16 to 19 provision and several governors as well as a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils. They spoke with pupils about their learning in lessons and their experiences in school. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's review of its performance, plans for improvement, safeguarding procedure and incident logs. The lead inspector looked at records of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information about pupils' progress and the standards achieved. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' work during visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors reviewed 58 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 91 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 90 free-text responses.

Inspection team

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Nigel Boyd	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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