

Inspection of Allestree Woodlands School

Blenheim Drive, Allestree, Derby DE22 2LW

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. The school's 'CORE' (courage, optimism, regard and endeavour) values are evident and understood by pupils. Pupils benefit from an improving quality of education. However, some pupils' experiences are less positive than those of their peers.

Behaviour has improved considerably. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and are supported to make the right decisions. In lessons, pupils behave well. This is not always the case around the school site and at social times. Pupils do not always respond respectfully when challenged by staff. Some pupils occasionally experience bullying. Pupils know that staff will act quickly, but this does not always have the necessary impact.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good. Pupils appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities on offer, such as the popular chess club. Pupils learn about rights and responsibilities and how to keep themselves safe. High-quality careers education prepares pupils well for their next steps.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum reflects leaders' ambition for all pupils. It is broad and offers pupils a range of academic experiences. All pupils study a modern foreign language and many take this as an option at GCSE level. Leaders promote reading across the school. Increasingly, pupils read for pleasure. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as other pupils. The curriculum planning for most subjects is clear and ensures that pupils' learning will build year on year. This is not the case in all subjects, however.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In subjects that are well planned, teachers break down the learning into small chunks so that all pupils learn and remember more.

Leaders have not implemented an effective assessment and feedback policy across the school. Teachers do not routinely identify gaps in pupils' knowledge in all subjects. Pupils do not always find feedback helpful. Some pupils do not know how to improve their work or develop their understanding.

Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of all pupils. They do not ensure that all pupils do their best. Some pupils produce work that is not of high-enough quality or ambition.

The curriculum in the sixth form allows students to study courses that meet their interests and aspirations. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide supportive and timely feedback. Students enjoy positive relationships with their teachers.

This is an inclusive school. Pupils with SEND are supported well in most subjects. Teachers plan for their needs and teaching assistants provide helpful support in class. Pupils who attend the school's specialist hearing provision learn with their peers in lessons and are included in all parts of school life. Deaf pupils are well supported, particularly by additional adults.

The new behaviour policy has led to improvements to behaviour in lessons. Lessons are calm and orderly. However, pupils expressed concerns about the behaviour of others, particularly at social times and between lessons.

Leaders support pupils who struggle to attend regularly. Nevertheless, too many pupils are persistently absent from school.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Pupils' personal development is well catered for. Pupils enjoy enriching experiences and benefit from a range of clubs and activities such as chess club, sporting clubs and concerts. The school considers innovative ways to educate pupils about topics such as democracy, for example through the Island Project in Year 7. There are a range of leadership experiences in the sixth form. These include becoming mental health ambassadors, first aiders and school leaders.

Pupils receive high-quality careers advice to help them make wise and ambitious decisions about their future. Leaders make sure that careers education takes account of pupils' personal interests. Pupils get information about a range of post-16 providers, including academic and non-academic routes.

Leaders are bringing about the necessary improvements to the school. Governors are knowledgeable and hold leaders to account effectively. They offer appropriate support.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate that leaders are considerate of their workload and their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding are highly knowledgeable. They maintain a good oversight of any issues that arise. All staff have been well trained in safeguarding and understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Staff pass on any concerns they have. Leaders ensure that pupils get the support they need in a timely manner. Records relating to child protection are detailed, well organised and stored securely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not implemented a clear assessment and feedback policy. Pupils struggle to identify where they need to improve. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum and assessment are implemented consistently well throughout the school so that all pupils know how to improve their work and achieve their full potential.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations about the quality of pupils' written work. In some pupils' books, work is not completed to a high enough standard. Some pupils do not make the progress they should through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work, and work completed in class, are consistently high.
- Pupils do not behave consistently well around the school site at social times and between lessons. They do not always respond positively when challenged by staff. Some pupils feel uncomfortable around the school building. Leaders should ensure that pupils are respectful in the way that they communicate and conduct themselves. They should ensure that pupils are supported to behave well in all aspects of school life.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent. They are missing education and are at risk of falling behind their peers. Leaders should continue to develop strategies to ensure that all pupils attend regularly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil 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.

School details

Unique reference number	137911
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10212260
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1345
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rowland Travis
Principal	Gemma Penny
Website	www.woodlands.derby.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2018

Information about this school

- The school uses the following alternative off-site providers: the Kingsmead School, Derby Pride Academy, Derby College. These providers are all registered. The school also uses The Island Project, which is an unregistered provider.
- The school has an enhanced resource facility for hearing impaired students. At the time of the inspection, 25 pupils were attending this provision. These pupils attend lessons with other pupils in school, as well as receiving specialist support in the provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide students in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in art, music, English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. For these subjects, they checked the work pupils had produced in lessons and spoke to pupils in the class.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for: behaviour, personal development, the on-site alternative provision and the provision of pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. She reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors met with all teachers and a group of support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and six other governors.
- Inspectors visited tutor time and observed pupils around the school at break and lunchtime. An inspector held telephone conversations with staff who work with pupils at an alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaires and Ofsted pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Mitchley	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Monk	Ofsted Inspector
Keval Thakrar	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Swales	Ofsted Inspector

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