

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: New Woodlands School

Shroffold Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 5PD

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 December 2024

Outcome

New Woodlands School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils' social and emotional health is paramount. Everyone goes the extra mile to ensure that pupils get the most from school. Pupils value the help that they get from staff a great deal, especially in understanding how to regulate their behaviour. Highly positive relationships between staff and pupils add significantly to pupils' well-being.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is strong. While some pupils struggle to maintain an even keel throughout the day, they know what to do to get back into the right frame of mind for learning. The school is especially successful in enabling pupils to get the most out of their lessons. However, the small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school do not benefit from the school's strong focus on developing social and emotional skills.

The curriculum gives pupils a wide range of experiences and opportunities. This prepares them well for the next stage of their lives. The school's high expectations mean that pupils gain recognised certificates and awards, and all move to further education, training or employment when they leave the school.

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

The great strength of the school is the way it develops pupils' personal skills and gets them ready for adulthood. Staff are well trained in supporting pupils to manage their behaviour and giving them the best chance of achieving their potential. It is noticeable, for example, that classrooms are calm and positive spaces where learning is rarely interrupted and routines are well established.

Support staff, including teaching assistants, alongside therapists and external professionals, complement the work of teachers most effectively. For example, therapists work with pupils to help them understand how to manage their emotions and behaviour. These arrangements allow the school to provide swift and well-targeted interventions where necessary. The in-school expertise greatly enhances the support that pupils receive. Pupils' behaviour improves significantly as they move through the school.

The curriculum is logically structured to build and develop pupils' learning over time. Teaching is organised carefully to enable pupils to master important ideas before moving on to more complex work. Teachers know their pupils well. Typically, they modify what and how they teach to meet pupils' specific needs. This helps to ensure that pupils can access the learning, work at their own pace and achieve well.

The curriculum is put into practice effectively. This includes a clear focus on teaching early reading to primary-aged pupils. Staff teach the school's phonics programme skilfully. Pupils gain the skills and knowledge that they need to become increasingly assured readers as they get older. In subjects across the school, teachers are skilled at making sure that all pupils are supported effectively. Typically, they explain the work carefully, recap previous learning and show pupils how to tackle tasks successfully. This approach helps pupils to develop their learning.

The school's work to reduce absences has had some notable successes. Many pupils arrive at the school with a history of poor attendance. The school employs a wide range of strategies to get pupils to attend regularly. These include, for example, home visits, and regular meetings with the local authority. In addition, school awards and certificates for good attendance are used to encourage pupils to come to school regularly. As a result, the attendance of many pupils improves considerably. Despite this, however, a small number of pupils do not attend school regularly enough and, overall, absences remain high.

The formal curriculum is enhanced well by a wide range of visits to places of interest, for example the Tate Modern and The British Museum. Careers education is a central component of the personal, social and health education programme, as are relationships and sex education. This deliberate work to broaden pupils' horizons is paying dividends. Pupils are exposed to new ideas, learn how to travel safely and make sense of the outside world. Pupils develop the essential skills that they need for adulthood.

Staff's workload and well-being are given appropriate focus by leaders and governors. The governing body carries out its responsibilities well, holding the school to account and providing support in equal measure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Despite the considerable work to improve attendance, a small number of pupils are persistently absent and overall absence remains high. This means that pupils do not benefit as often as they could from the good quality of education that the school provides. The school should ensure that the impact of the strategies it uses to improve pupils' attendance is evaluated so that the most effective strategies can be replicated to help more pupils improve their attendance.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	100763
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10345685
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michelle Fenniche
Headteacher	Carlie Warner
Website	www.newwoodlands.lewisham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- One inspector visited the alternative provision used by the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. Inspectors also met with teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including their written comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

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