

Caldecott Foundation School

Station Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6PW

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
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

- School leaders and governors have high aspirations. Their collective actions are improving the school rapidly.
- Senior leaders are determined and dedicated. They have succeeded in changing the school's culture so that the required improvements can take place.
- Staff have confidence in school leaders. They know that everyone is expected to play their part in ensuring that the school provides the very best for its pupils.
- Senior leaders lead by example. They have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, but know there is more to do to make this an outstanding school.
- Most pupils are making good progress in a range of subjects. This is particularly true of the vocational strands of the curriculum.
- Safeguarding of pupils and the school's work to promote pupils' emotional well-being are very effective.
- Leaders and governors know that their actions to improve the school would benefit from the scrutiny of an independent, external source.
- Governors' combined knowledge and expertise have had a positive impact on ensuring that leaders are effective, leading to better outcomes for pupils.
- Teaching staff know their pupils well and provide excellent pastoral support. Because of this, most pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Most pupils behave very well. Incidents of serious disruption to learning have greatly reduced, due to high expectations and a more consistent approach from staff.
- Support staff are very effective in ensuring that pupils are ready to learn. This includes non-teaching support staff, who play key roles in ensuring that the school is a safe environment.
- The school's systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress need further refinement to ensure that they are a more useful tool for teachers and leaders.
- The school's curriculum suits the needs of its pupils well. However, pupils in some year groups do not receive the careers guidance and support that they should.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the school's system for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress so that:
 - leaders have a clearer understanding of the progress that pupils are making and how this equates to the requirements of the national curriculum
 - teachers quickly identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they can plan learning that fully addresses pupils' needs, especially in English and mathematics
 - pupils make more accelerated progress because staff have a clearer understanding of their potential.
- Extend the careers guidance currently available to pupils in Year 11 to all pupils who are entitled, so that statutory requirements are met.
- Ensure that leaders and governors have access to insightful and impartial advice about the quality and impact of their actions to further improve the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The head of education leads the school with great determination. Her perseverance and firm resolve to move things forward have ensured that pupils benefit from a school which is good and improving.
- Senior and middle leaders work well as a team. Their contrasting strengths in different areas of the curriculum and expertise in working with vulnerable pupils ensure that the school's academic and pastoral provision is equally sound.
- Staff value the guidance and support they receive from leaders. They are particularly appreciative of the professional development they are able to access. All staff who responded to the online questionnaire (18 respondents) believe that the school is a lot better than it was at the last inspection.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively. They know where practice is strong and ensure that appropriate support and training are made available when gaps in the quality of provision are identified.
- Leaders constantly review the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of individual pupils, as well as the differing cohorts throughout the school. Recent changes in the way the key stage 3 curriculum is delivered have been beneficial and ensure that pupils make better sense of what they are learning. The school's vocational curriculum is particularly strong and greatly valued by the pupils who access it.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is woven through the curriculum and day-to-day life of the school. Cross-curricular themes support pupils in learning how to keep safe, cope with change, and to develop and sustain relationships. Ensuring that pupils understand values such as tolerance and mutual respect is given a high priority and helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include residential visits and educational trips to places such as Stonehenge. Day trips into the local community are the norm and strengthen pupils' social and emotional development, as well as support their academic progress.
- School leaders use additional funding to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds well. Because of the context of the school, much of this funding is subject to close monitoring from outside agencies. This ensures that individual pupils benefit fully from the carefully targeted and bespoke resources which the funding provides.
- The school's small allocation of sport premium funding is used effectively, providing equipment or subsidising activities, such as horse riding and trampolining.
- School leaders track pupils' progress well, although realise that this aspect of their work could be better. A system that quickly establishes pupils' starting points, matched to the expectations of the national curriculum, would help leaders to better understand attainment and progress information, as well as providing teachers with a more useful tool to plan more effective learning.
- Self-evaluation is honest and credible and leads to effective improvement planning. However, leaders and governors recognise that the current system for validating key

priorities and assessing the effectiveness of actions to improve the school risks becoming insular, because it lacks an objective external eye.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has undergone a number of changes in membership since its inception after the last inspection, and was reconstituted in March 2016. Consequently, governors are now more representative of the wider school community. They know the school's strengths, and have an increasing knowledge of what needs to be done to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- Governors possess a wide range of experience and expertise which they put to good use in supporting and challenging school leaders. This ensures the governing body carries out its statutory duties well, including checking that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and given a high priority.
- The governing body is effective at ensuring that strategic leadership of the school is sound. Governors are forward thinking. They aspire for the school to become outstanding and demonstrate a clear determination to make this the case.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose. The single central record of staff checks is administered in an efficient manner. Staff are vigilant and work hard to ensure that the welfare, health and safety of pupils are given the highest priority. This is all the more important due to the high level of need of many of the school's pupils. Staff, including non-teaching support staff, were able to explain clearly to inspectors how they keep pupils safe, and what actions they would take if they had concerns.
- Staff and governors are trained at an appropriate level according to the degree of responsibility they have within the school. This includes physical intervention, administration of first aid, or the safer recruitment of staff. Risk assessments are in place to cover different aspects of provision, including the safety of pupils using the school's vocational education facilities.
- During the inspection, inspectors paid close attention to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school, although this had not always been the case. All parents and carers who completed the online survey, or spoke to inspectors during the inspection, said they feel that pupils are safe in school. All staff who completed the staff survey expressed an opinion that pupils were safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across the school. This ensures that the majority of pupils make at least good progress in a range of subjects across all key stages.

- Teaching staff know pupils well. They plan and deliver effective learning opportunities, ensuring that pupils are engaged in their learning and motivated to do their best. This means that outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils. On a number of occasions, inspectors witnessed pupils being challenged to improve their work, even when pupils expressed doubt in their own ability. This included a key stage 4 mathematics lesson where pupils were challenged to persevere with multiplication problems, and a food technology class, where pupils were preparing vegetables, learning how to use 'julienne' or 'brunoise' cuts.
- High levels of staffing ensure that pupils benefit from a good degree of personalised learning. Most teaching is carried out in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Support staff are particularly effective at keeping pupils on task. Crucially, support staff understand the importance of promoting success, without doing pupils' work for them.
- Teaching staff ensure that English and mathematics skills are consolidated across the wider curriculum. Examples include pupils receiving support to organise their writing in the building construction centre, or in using a combination of mathematics and English skills to plan aspects of an eagerly anticipated flight in a glider.
- Teaching and support staff are particularly skilled at supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many staff have considerable experience in working with pupils from vulnerable backgrounds, including those who have had negative experiences in previous schools. Consequently, most pupils are becoming successful learners once more, growing in confidence and strengthening their self-esteem.

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 understand the needs of individual pupils well. Induction and integration processes for new pupils are managed well, especially for pupils who have been out of education for long periods of time.
- Many pupils who join the school have had negative experiences of education in the past. The school's work to build success and repair pupils' self-confidence is a particular strength. Pupils appreciate the care shown to them by staff and told inspectors on more than one occasion, if slightly grudgingly, that the school is good, and that different members of staff, 'are the best'.
- The school's curriculum develops pupils' physical and emotional well-being very well. Themes that promote developing and sustaining relationships, coping with change, or building self-respect and respecting others, underpin the wider curriculum.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school, although some pupils don't always follow the school's relationships (behaviour) policy as well as others. They said that they understand what bullying is and know how to deal with it if it occurs.
- Currently, good quality independent careers advice and guidance are only available to pupils in Year 11. This is partly due to the varying numbers of pupils in each cohort.

Some guidance is available to pupils in Years 8 to 10, but school leaders know that this aspect of the school's provision needs to be better and have plans to extend current arrangements in Year 11 to other year groups.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. School leaders attach high priority to this aspect of the school's culture and, although there is still work to do, the impact of a new relationships policy, training for staff and higher expectations of pupils has been very positive. As a result, incidents of serious disruption in classrooms and around the school have fallen dramatically over a three-year period.
- During the inspection, inspectors didn't witness any serious disruptions to learning. However, some pupils find concentrating difficult, resulting in low-level disruption. When this happens, staff have developed good strategies to minimise disruption to learning, de-escalating potential problems before they arise.
- Attendance is generally good, although the absence rates of a small number of pupils have a negative impact on the school's attendance figures. Leaders work hard in partnership with parents and carers to minimise absence. This is especially the case for pupils who find attending school particularly disturbing due to poor experiences in the past, or other circumstances beyond their immediate control.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are good. There is a strong correlation between improvements in pupils' behaviour, the school's excellent work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare, and the good and improving outcomes now evident for the majority of learners.
- In the last three years, all pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 11, or from the sixth form, have gone on to further education, training or employment.
- Most pupils join the school with low or very low prior attainment. This is compounded by wide gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, due in many cases to pupils not attending school for significant amounts of time prior to coming to Caldecott. This is especially the case in English and mathematics. Despite this, and generally after a period spent integrating into the school, the majority of pupils make good progress from their different starting points in a range of subjects.
- The school's vocational offer is a key factor in preparing pupils for further education, training or employment. Pupils enjoy the various options open to them, including construction, food technology, hair and beauty, motor mechanics and land-based studies. Motivation to do well in these subjects is strong. Consequently, progress in these areas is also strong, and impacts well on improving pupils' functional mathematics and English skills.
- It is not possible to compare pupils' outcomes overall or by group with other schools nationally in a meaningful way. This is due to the very small numbers of pupils in each year group and the school's unique context.

School details

Unique reference number	119027
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10019886

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	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Green
Headteacher	Stacey McShane (head of education)
Telephone number	01303 815665
Website	www.caldecottfoundation.co.uk
Email address	education@caldecottfoundation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school provides educational services within The Caldecott Foundation. Since the last inspection, governance of the school has been delegated to a newly formed governing body. The governing body reports to the trustees of The Caldecott Foundation.
- Most pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan which relates to their social, emotional and behavioural needs. Many have been excluded from other settings prior to joining this school.
- The school uses no local alternative provision. However, the school does have a small provision situated in the East Midlands. This alternative provision has its own local staff, but is led and managed by the school's head of education.
- At the time of the inspection, all of the school's pupils were eligible for support from pupil premium funding.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils studying in the school's sixth form.

- The school has an off-site provision where motor vehicle studies are taught to its own students and those from other schools.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out a series of classroom and workshop visits, accompanied by senior leaders. During visits, inspectors talked to pupils about the quality of their work and assessed the progress they were making.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' work, heard pupils read and observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Meetings were held with pupils, a parent, the head of education accompanied by the head of school, the associate headteacher, middle leaders, support staff and three governors. The lead inspector talked to the class teacher of the school's East Midlands provision on the telephone.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils and staff who responded to their different online questionnaires.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers, taking into account two responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and accompanying free-text responses.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents and policies, including those to do with safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. They looked at minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about pupils' outcomes provided by the school, personal education plans, the school's self-evaluation of its own performance and the school's improvement planning.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Simon Yates

Ofsted Inspector

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