

Redwood

Hudsons Walk, Rochdale, Lancashire OL11 5EF

Inspection dates

7–8 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
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, with the support of governors, has been the driving force behind a restructuring of his workforce and subsequent actions for school improvement. As a result, this is now a good and rapidly improving school. Redwood has an optimistic staff team that has signed up to a shared vision to take the school forward.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, there is a warm, welcoming atmosphere at the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work and the levels of care shown by staff.
- Senior leaders ensure that they consistently check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They provide effective feedback and support to staff which leads to improvements and the sharing of best practice.
- Middle leaders, with good support from senior leaders, are beginning to develop their skills when conducting observations in lessons.
- The great majority of all groups of pupils (including disadvantaged, the most able and most able disadvantaged) make expected or better progress from their starting points in English, mathematics and personal and social development.
- Occasionally, the most able pupils are required to complete or engage in work which is too easy before they access greater challenges.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes offered by the school are good. There is strong leadership which leads to good outcomes for learners, the vast majority of whom move on to sustained further education, employment or training. However, learners would benefit from greater challenge when applying their reading and writing skills.
- School improvement planning is clear in terms of charting the school's priorities and direction of travel. However, some leaders do not fully evaluate their work when they report to governors. As a result, governors do not always have a clear enough picture of school improvement when holding leaders to account.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the capacity of leadership and management to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupil outcomes, by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders improve their skills in observing lessons and providing supportive and challenging feedback to their colleagues
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are able to access the right levels of challenge in all lessons
 - ensuring that learners taking the 16 to 19 study programme have increased opportunities to use and apply their reading and writing skills.
- Further improve governance, by:
 - ensuring that all leaders check and evaluate agreed school improvement actions and information about pupil progress with greater precision
 - ensuring that governors make use of leaders' reports to achieve a greater focus upon school improvement priorities, actions and outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed effectively so that the school is now good. Staff morale is high and there is great optimism in terms of the school's vision and aspirations for the future. The school is no longer reliant upon close support from the local authority school improvement team.
- A number of parents made extremely positive comments about this 'wonderful, fabulous' school, mostly because of the 'caring and supportive staff'. The positive climate for learning and the encouragement pupils receive have led to their outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- There has been a recent restructuring of the school's staffing arrangements, including a revision of roles and responsibilities for staff. New senior leaders have successfully improved the way that information about pupils' learning, behaviour and emotional welfare is gathered.
- Senior leaders' checking of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment shows that teachers make more consistent use of pupil information to plan their lessons to meet individual needs. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and pupils make expected or better progress from their starting points.
- Middle leaders are being deployed increasingly to support the school's checking of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In this way, newly qualified and aspiring teachers are improving their teaching. Some middle leaders need further development of the skills required to conduct observations in lessons and to provide effective feedback to their colleagues. Others, for example in the department for 16 to 19 study programmes, have yet to evaluate fully pupil progress information in order to identify and report on strengths and areas for improvement.
- There are good arrangements in place for the appraisal of teachers and performance management of support staff. The agreed policies ensure that staff are able to reflect upon their successes and areas for development. They also know that their agreed objectives will contribute to and enhance school improvement priorities.
- The school's curriculum has been reviewed so that subject specialists can teach across key stage 3 and through to key stage 4. Adaptations are made for some pupils because there is such a diverse range of special educational needs and disabilities. For example, the most able pupils are able to successfully attend some or most of their lessons in the co-located secondary high school, Oulder Hill Community School. The curriculum in school is broad and balanced, enabling pupils to extend their learning beyond basic literacy and numeracy skills. As well as science and humanities, pupils can choose from art and design, food technology, enterprise, performing arts, sport (including rock climbing) and design and technology on two afternoons per week.
- There is effective partnership working with other special schools in Greater Manchester and with the Rochdale secondary high schools association. The sharing of best

practices has resulted in improvements at Redwood in teachers' assessment, marking and feedback.

- Parents are full of praise for the school and value the care, support and guidance provided.

Governance of the school

- Governance is good and improving.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a local authority review of governance. There has been a restructuring following a skills audit. There is a new chair of governors.
- Governors are well informed about the school's work and talk knowledgeably about aspects such as safeguarding, the recent staffing restructure or how leaders check on pupil progress in different subjects.
- Governors recognise that their knowledge about the impact of planned school improvement actions would be enhanced by more evaluative reports from some school leaders, for example with regard to the types and frequencies of pupils' behaviour in school.
- Governors know that pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding have been used to target the needs of specific pupils. They know about the positive impact in the progress rates of targeted pupils in English and mathematics and their increased access to the curriculum and school life (for example, via improved home-school links or support for medical needs).

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a strong feature of the school's work especially in terms of how agreed policies are in evidence in practice. For example, procedures for transporting pupils to and from the school are well managed.
- Staff are able to explain how safeguarding update training has led them to become more aware of signs of abuse and how and when to report concerns through the school's agreed referral process.
- The premises are well maintained and arrangements for admitting visitors are secure. An explanatory safeguarding leaflet is provided on entry to the school.
- Governors undergo regular update training for safeguarding. They have had safer recruitment training and staff undergo criminal and other background checks prior to their appointment. Staff and governors have received 'Prevent' training (with regard to how schools can address possible radicalisation of pupils). Inspectors observed that issues relating to terrorism were currently being considered across the classes.
- Records relating to looked after children or children in need are well maintained, chronological and securely stored.
- Staff meet weekly about safeguarding matters. Safeguarding is a 'must' in all staff appraisal objectives.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has continued to improve since the last inspection and is now good. Leaders are in a position whereby they can support newly qualified and aspiring teachers.
- Teachers ensure that their classrooms are organised to meet a diverse range of needs. Pupils know that they are expected to behave well in lessons and to concentrate on their learning. Teachers and support staff work together well to ensure that pupils' individual learning, personal, social, emotional and health needs are met. Pupils' individual files are used to update the progress they are making against the targets that have been set, in line with agreed school policies.
- Teaching and support for the less able pupils is good because staff get to know them so well. Through regular 'my plan' checks with pupils, activities in lessons are correctly pitched to provide good levels of challenge. For example, in key stage 4, pupils develop their technical skills in cookery as well as their independence and self-confidence in social situations. Pupils are encouraged to talk and write about their progress during 'my plan' sessions.
- Teachers, with reference to agreed school policies, are skilled in their deployment of support staff and use of resources to engage pupils in lessons. The most able pupils are encouraged to draft and redraft their independent writing and ensure that they put in correct punctuation. In mathematics, pupils are able to handle different weights when making decisions about whether objects are lighter or heavier. Occasionally, most-able pupils have to complete easier tasks before being fully challenged, slowing the pace of learning and progress.
- Teachers ensure that there is always a focus upon pupils' personal and social development in line with agreed school policies. For example, in physical education lessons, the teacher assesses pupils' personal, social and health needs alongside physical and coordination criteria. In performing arts, staff encourage pupils to reflect upon their efforts when performing an African mime dance or to provide feedback to their peers.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to participate in lessons that consider current affairs, such as the threat of terrorism. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is consequently enhanced.
- Reading homework is provided for some pupils. Some pupils are able to use portable computers at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils benefit greatly from the school's focus upon physical health and well-being. They were represented at a recent celebration event of the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) at the House of Lords.
- Peer feedback in lessons encourages pupils to be constructive and helpful to each other. Pupils' attitudes to learning and engagement in lessons are outstanding.

- Pupil voice is valued. Pupils have opportunities to become young leaders and prefects. They are able to make decisions when reviewing their education, health and care plans. Nearly half of all pupils responded to the online survey to give their views about the school. They were overwhelmingly positive about how the school supports their needs and keeps them safe. Some said that they would like more challenge in their work!
- Pupils are exceptionally polite and well-mannered. They welcome visitors with genuine warmth and interest.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the school's promotion of British values are outstanding. Pupils spoken to say, 'We're all different here, so it's not a problem' when referring to whether or not bullying is an issue.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in a range of contexts, for example during a busy Christmas Fayre held during the inspection.
- Fixed-term exclusions have reduced greatly since the last inspection report, as have recorded incidents in school.
- Attendance of pupils is a strength. Some pupils have medical and health needs but parents ensure that they attend school as often as they can. Case study examples, including those for children looked after, demonstrate that any persistent or unauthorised absences are addressed, leading to improved attendance.
- Pupils spoken to say they feel safe in school. Any concerns they have are dealt with very effectively by caring and supportive staff. Most-able pupils are knowledgeable about keeping safe on the internet and about the threats of terrorism. Other pupils receive strong support and guidance from staff.
- Staff supervision levels are very strong. Any challenging behaviour is safely and sensitively managed so that there is minimal disruption to learning.
- Parents, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's efforts to keep pupils safe, and similarly with regard to how staff manage behaviour and deal with any bullying.
- The support provided for pupils who have challenging behaviour is exceptional. Staff manage situations sensitively and calmly without disturbing the learning of others. Pupils are then guided quickly back towards learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The great majority of all groups of pupils (including disadvantaged, the most able and most able disadvantaged, and pupils who speak English as an additional language) make expected or better progress from their starting points in English, mathematics and personal and social development. Progress that pupils make is in line with that made nationally by pupils from similar starting points.
- The school's accurate records show that there are no significant differences between the progress made from their starting points by disadvantaged pupils across all groups with that of their peers.

- By the time they leave school, either at the end of Year 11 or at Year 14, pupils achieve a range of external awards or qualifications depending upon the pathway they have followed. They achieve awards in computing, physical education, personal and social development as well as in functional skills awards for English and mathematics. Most-able pupils achieve higher entry-level qualifications in English, mathematics, science and art.
- Pupils achieve well in different subjects, for example where they are encouraged to sing together or to make sense of symbols on a map. Pupils learn about the world of work from Year 9 and are able to take vocational courses in preparation for post-16.
- A small number of pupils make exceptional progress from their starting points in English, mathematics and science. They receive outstanding support in overcoming barriers to learning so that they can successfully access lessons in the co-located secondary school.
- Pupils make progress in their reading because teachers assess their levels and pitch teaching and support accordingly. They demonstrate knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) when trying to read new words. The most able pupils read to gather information when researching a topic.
- Pupils receiving additional support in English and mathematics through Year 7 catch-up funding make expected or better progress from their starting points to be in line with their peers.
- The vast majority of pupils move on to further education, employment or training when they leave school. Most move on to the school's 16 to 19 study programmes provision at the REEC centre and then to the hospital-based internship programme.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The leadership and management of school-based and off-site 16 to 19 study programmes are good. Strong systems and procedures for assessing students and checking on their progress are in place and are used to track learners' progress. Transition arrangements from the school to the 16 to 19 study programmes are good.
- Provision in school for the least able learners attending 16 to 19 study programmes is good. Teachers' planning is pitched according to learners' needs and abilities so that they engage in activities that are also appropriate for their ages. As a result, they make small but definite steps of progress, for example in how well they will persevere when practising skills like rolling pastry or when involved in creating a presentation for an upcoming education, health and care plan (EHCP) meeting.
- The great majority of learners (including the most able, disadvantaged and those who have differing levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities) make expected or better progress from their starting points in mathematics and personal and social development. Fewer learners in each of these groups make similar levels of progress in reading and writing. Learners would benefit from more opportunities to use, apply and improve their reading and writing skills, especially on work placements.
- Learners achieve a wide range of external qualifications and accreditation during their time in the 16 to 19 provision and by the time they leave. These include courses in life and living skills, preparation for working life, health and safety and basic food hygiene.

They continue to achieve entry or higher-level accreditation in English, mathematics and personal and social development.

- Pupils based in off-site provision at the REEC centre engage enthusiastically in vocational learning, for example when creating paper bricks, packaging them up and selling them on during an enterprise programme.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of learners in 16-19 provision is outstanding. They demonstrate exceptionally good attitudes and engagement, especially in their work placements. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. At all times, they are respectful and tolerant of each other, of adults who support them and when working or socialising within the local community.
- All learners benefit from strong careers advice and guidance. They respond exceptionally well to the advice and support received from 'job coaches' when they engage in work placements in a local hospital. For example, most-able students learn to stocktake and to ensure that the hospital shop is regularly stocked with confectionary. Other learners make and serve drinks and snacks for inpatients at the hospital.
- Learners aged 16 to 19 benefit from residential visits to develop their independent living skills.
- The vast majority of learners move on to further education, employment or training when they leave at the end of Year 14. A number of students move on to paid employment in local businesses with which the school has built strong partnerships.
- Safeguarding arrangements for learners attending 16 to 19 programmes are effective. Supervision levels, for example when learners attend internship placements at the hospital, are high, while still enabling learners to develop work-related skills.

School details

Unique reference number	135202
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10019821

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Kiely
Headteacher	Stuart Pidgeon
Telephone number	01706 750815
Website	www.redwood-school.com/secondary
Email address	info@redwood-school.com
Date of previous inspection	12–13 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and some are of Asian/Pakistani British heritage.
- The school provides mostly for pupils who have moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Other groups have social, emotional and mental health needs; speech, language and communication needs; and/or multi-sensory and physical difficulties.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is above average.
- The school has two off-site 16 to 19 study programmes: the REEC centre (Redwood Education and Enterprise Centre) and a supported internship programme based at Rochdale Infirmary.
- There has been a recent restructuring of staffing, including leadership, at the school.
- The school has partnerships with the Rochdale secondary schools association and with the Greater Manchester special schools association.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a cross-section of classes, both in the school and in the 16 to 19 off-site provision.
- Inspectors met informally and formally with small and larger groups of pupils in the school and in the off-site centres.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents who were attending the school's 'Christmas Fayre' event.
- An inspector heard a small group of pupils read and spoke to them about their progress.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, two members of the governing body and two members of the local authority school improvement team.
- Inspectors considered responses from Parent View (the online site for parents to record their views about the school), the online staff questionnaire survey and pupil questionnaire survey.
- A range of documents was considered, including: the school's self-review document; the school improvement plan; a range of school policies, including for teaching, learning and assessment and appraisal and performance management of staff; governors' reports; and recent external reports about the school. Information about pupils' learning, behaviour and attendance were looked at, as well their workbooks.

Inspection team

Jon Ashley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Parker	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Bentham	Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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