

Inspection of Emily Wilding Davison School

Thornhill Road, Ponteland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE20 9QB

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

When Emily Wilding Davison School was inspected January 2023, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on two occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, leaders were judged to have made progress to improve the school, but more work was necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a rapidly improved school. Pupils are valued and nurtured. Skilled staff provide personalised learning and support. There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. The school's core 'RICH-T' values of respect, integrity, compassion, honesty and trust are woven through the school's curriculum. Pupils earn 'golden tickets' when they display these behaviours.

The curriculum is broad and aspirational. It is designed to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils experience a variety of learning opportunities, including vocational and academic courses. Pupils who access alternative provision learn to engage in education, follow their interests and develop their skills.

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and good-natured. The school ensures that pupils are safe and have staff to turn to if they need help. Pupils learn to behave well. Staff teach them to understand and manage their emotions. Pupils receive strong support for their mental health. Staff help pupils to reduce their anxiety and develop their confidence.

The school provides various enrichment opportunities. Pupils experience visits to museums, places of worship and theatre performances. They hold positions of responsibility as school councillors. The school's residential trips and outdoor education activities help pupils to develop independence and learn life skills.

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

The school is now a calm and pleasant place to learn. Staff have the necessary expertise to understand and meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well.

Leaders have developed a new curriculum. Pupils can gain a range of qualifications including at GCSE and NCFE levels. The content for each curriculum subject has been thoughtfully chosen and coherently sequenced. It is clear what knowledge pupils need to know, when and why.

There is an effective system to check pupils' progress, including for those who attend alternative provision. Teachers use the information they collate from their assessments to plan pupils' next steps in learning effectively. They identify when pupils need extra teaching or support. Teachers' assessments inform pupils' individual SEND plans. Each pupil's small steps of learning are identified in these plans. The SEND plans link with precision to pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. External professionals, including therapists, work with staff to ensure that pupils' needs are met well.

The importance of reading for pleasure is promoted well. Phonics is taught discretely for those in the early stages of learning to read. Topics of learning are linked to high-quality texts. Staff seize every chance possible to develop pupils' vocabulary

and understanding of language. For example, pupils use persuasive language to support the advertising of products they create for their enterprise projects.

The school utilises a range of alternative providers of education. Leaders have strengthened their oversight of these provisions. They have a secure understanding of the quality of education pupils receive. They ensure that learning is in line with outcomes in pupils' EHC plans.

Most pupils have experienced long-term absence in their previous schools. Many are admitted to this school having become disillusioned with education. This school is unwavering in its determination to reduce pupils' persistent absence. For example, staff teach in the community to help pupils with high anxiety to access learning. There are several examples of how the attendance of individual pupils has increased significantly during their time at the school. Despite these, improving pupils' attendance remains an ongoing and high priority for the school.

The school promote pupils' personal development well. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum contains suitable topics of learning. Pupils learn about protected characteristics, equality, democracy and the rule of law. They receive age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education. They learn about potential risks including from vaping, hate crime and drugs. They benefit from using the school's gym. Pupils take part in trips such as to Hadrian's Wall and Holy Island. Older pupils participate in work experience opportunities. Pupils receive independent advice to help them to make informed choices about their next steps in education, training or employment.

Staff receive very effective support for their workload and welfare. The support for their mental well-being is strong. Staff are rightly proud to work at the school. Staff, leaders and governors work with absolute determination to secure continued whole school improvements. Together, they are a strong, successful team, who genuinely want the best for pupils in their care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many pupils miss essential learning and experiences. This has a detrimental effect on their education. Leaders should redouble their efforts to ensure that parents and carers understand that persistent absence disadvantages their children educationally and socially.

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	132771
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10323476
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Harrison
Headteacher	Michael Hutchison
Website	https://ewd.northumberland.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils have an EHC plan. The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils also have autism spectrum disorder and associated cognition and learning and communication needs.
- The school uses the services of 10 unregistered alternative providers. It also uses a business provider to arrange work experience placement for pupils.
- The school provides outreach provision through their 'teaching in the community' service.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils from Year 8 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the designated leader for safeguarding, who is also the behaviour and attendance leader, the school business manager, the attendance manager, the leader for personal development, the careers leader, the teaching and learning leader, some curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors met with some members of staff and some pupils. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body. An inspector spoke on the telephone with a school improvement partner for the local authority.
- An inspector visited one alternative provider used by the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into English, including reading, mathematics and art. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to staff and spoke to some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including science and PSHE.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and carers and staff. Inspectors spoke with some parents on the telephone.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Barton	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Vellensworth	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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