

# Inspection of a good school: Keelman's Way School

Campbell Park Road, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear NE31 1QY

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Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

## Outcome

Keelman's Way School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Keelman's Way School provides a nurturing environment in which pupils thrive. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their welfare, care and safety are at the centre of everything that staff do. Pupils are happy and feel safe. Adults know individual pupils extremely well. There are highly positive relationships between pupils and members of staff. Pupils are friendly and supportive of their peers. Behaviour is exemplary.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. There is a clear ambition that every pupil learns the skills that they need to live as full a life as possible. The personal development programme is especially strong. It gives pupils many opportunities to understand the world outside school to prepare for adulthood. For some pupils, this includes work experience in local businesses and volunteering in the community.

Pupils learn in a lovely environment and access purpose-built facilities. They enjoy being in the outdoor spaces such as the sensory and wildlife gardens. Pupils learn gardening skills in the greenhouse and school allotment. The school provides onsite hydrotherapy, music therapy and other programmes tailored to individual needs.

The school has replicated many aspects of the provision at the new base, Keelman's at South Shields.

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

Appropriate 'curriculum pathways' are in place to meet the pupils' complex needs. Staff have a deep understanding of what individual pupils can do. This is considered when placing a pupil on a particular pathway. There is continuing development of the curriculum offer, for example the recent inclusion of music therapy. Revisions are made to the curriculum to ensure that the changing needs of pupils are met. In all pathways, staff have thought carefully about the important knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn and the order in which they will learn it.

In both the early years and semi-formal pathways there is an emphasis on developing communication skills. Pupils are taught to communicate through a variety of means, best suited to them. Staff encourage pupils to make choices through signing and picture exchange. Pupils are immersed in sensory stories. They enjoy interacting with staff and singing along to familiar rhymes. Pupils are learning through activities designed to be fun. For example, hunting for three-dimensional shapes in mathematics.

Within the subject specific pathway, pupils access a more formal curriculum. The curriculum design for mathematics assists pupils in attaining appropriate qualifications. Teachers know what to teach and when. They are adept in checking pupils' knowledge and understand when to move on to teaching a new concept. Older pupils complete units of work in preparation for adulthood that build towards accredited outcomes. Pupils learn to read in a variety of ways. Some pupils who are learning to read through phonics, do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their phonics knowledge. This means that they do not remember the phonics sounds that they have been taught.

The pathway for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) is highly effective. Pupils follow a sensory curriculum. This develops their interaction skills through learning activities which engage all the senses. The level of attention that adults show towards pupils is exceptional. Staff are very respectful of pupils. They take time to discuss lesson transitions using now and next symbols. Adults actively encourage pupils to take part in activities and model what to do. For example, pressing electronic switches to control devices. Staff assist pupils in becoming more aware of their bodies through hand massage. They carefully support pupils in changing their body position during the school day. This helps pupils to build up their core and leg strength. Staff are alert and give pupils time to rest when they need to do so. Staff manage pupil behaviour exceptionally well. They are very successful in helping pupils to regulate their emotions.

The school continues to broaden the wider curriculum offer. All classes contribute to the termly fairs, raising funds through enterprising activities. Older pupils relish their involvement in the running of the school café. They especially enjoy making the food to be sold. Staff provide a wide range of activities that help pupils to make the transition to the next stage of their lives.

Staff are highly committed to the school's success and are proud to work at Keelman's Way. Leaders reduce staff workload where possible. Teachers welcome being part of working parties and contributing to policy development. However, some members of staff do not consistently follow school policies and agreed approaches to teaching the curriculum. This means that a minority pupils miss out on some learning experiences.

Members of the governing body bring considerable experience to their role and carry out their duties effectively. As a result, leaders are both supported and held to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not reviewed the implementation of a small number of policies and agreed approaches to teaching the curriculum carefully enough. Occasionally, the learning experience of a minority of pupils does not match the school's intentions. The school should continue its work to support, evaluate and embed high quality teaching across the school.
- There is insufficient time given to the teaching of phonics for those pupils who are able to access phonics lessons. Some pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to practise their learning so that they remember and apply their phonics knowledge. The school should review and improve its approach to teaching phonics.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2014.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 136252   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | South Tyneside   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10297351   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Foundation   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 2 to 19  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 174  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 23   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>                    | Philip Johnson   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Paula Selby  |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.keelmanswayschool.co.uk">www.keelmanswayschool.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 3 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                    |

## Information about this school

- This school is part of the South Tyneside Co-Operative Special School Trust.
- The school operates a learning base, Keelman's at South Shields, located at Nevinson Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 8BT.
- All pupils at Keelman's Way School have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and/or other SEND.
- The school does not make use of any alternative education provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met also with a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into early reading and communication, mathematics and personal development. For each deep dive, the inspector looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at pupils' books and samples of their work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors took the views of staff into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## **Inspection team**

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Barton

Ofsted Inspector

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