

Woodside Academy

Grangewood Avenue, Little Thurrock, Grays, RM16 2GJ

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong and decisive leadership to the academy. As a result, all pupils, including those with disabilities and who have special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium, make good progress from their starting points and achievement is good and improving.
- The Principal and deputy headteacher make sure teachers know precisely what is expected of them and, therefore, the quality of teaching has improved and is good in all classes.
- Pupils love coming to the academy in the morning and say there are lots of 'awesome' clubs and lessons are interesting and enjoyable. They also say there is no bullying and they feel very safe at the academy.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and have good attitudes to learning. They are respectful to all adults and behave responsibly around the academy and at break times.
- The academy has an exciting and relevant curriculum which prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education and for life in modern Britain. The wide range of excellent clubs before and after school contributes to pupils' outstanding cultural development.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from when they start in the Nursery due to good provision and good teaching.
- Most parents are pleased with their children's progress. They particularly enjoy taking part in academy events and value the crèche facilities provided by the academy, which enable them to take an active part in these events.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always plan learning activities that give sufficient challenge to the most-able pupils.
- Not all teachers have a clear idea of what outstanding learning looks like or how to achieve this when planning lessons.
- Governors, senior and middle leaders do not get enough opportunities to take a full part in improving the academy because their strategic leadership roles are underdeveloped.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed how learning is planned and developed in all classes. Inspectors also carried out a walk around the academy to look at how well pupils learn in small groups in particular those who have disabilities and those who have special educational needs.
- Inspectors held meetings with: the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, pupils and parents. They examined a wide range of documentation including: safeguarding policies and procedures, the academy’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, the curriculum plan and teachers’ planning. They scrutinised a wide range of pupils’ work from last school year as well as recent work. They read with middle- and lower-ability pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Thirty eight parents responded via Parent View. Inspectors received two letters but no text responses from parents. Inspectors took full account of parents’ views.
- Inspectors received and considered 28 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Peter Lacey-Hastings

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Keen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodside Academy converted to become an academy school in December 2012. When its predecessor school, Woodside Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- This academy is larger than similar academies nationally.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a higher proportion than average of Black African and Any Other White heritage pupils. Most pupils have English as their first language.
- There are fewer pupils eligible for the pupil premium than the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are receiving school support is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average. 9 pupils have such statements.
- The academy runs its own breakfast club. There is also a wide range of before-and-after-school clubs and these were included in the inspection.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop strategic leadership in the academy by more effectively delegating responsibility and decision making to make better use of the skills that leaders at all levels, including governors, have to offer.
- Raise pupils' achievement so all make outstanding progress from their starting points by ensuring that:
 - teachers know what outstanding learning looks like and how to achieve this in lessons
 - learning activities are always sufficiently challenging for the most-able pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal and deputy headteacher are relentless in their drive to improve learning and teaching. As a result, all pupils make good progress from their starting points. This is evident from the data presented to inspectors and from the work in pupils' books from last school year.
- The deputy headteacher has a good understanding of the progress all pupils make in every class due to the rigorous, half-termly pupil-progress meetings with teachers. She and the Principal use this knowledge well to set challenging targets for pupils and teachers, which contribute to pupils' good achievement. This information is also used robustly to determine whether or not teachers move to a higher pay grade.
- Senior leaders are accurate in their assessment of the quality of education the academy offers and what must be done to maintain this. They have recognised that they must share good teaching across the academy and moved teachers around accordingly. However, they have not explored what outstanding learning looks like and how all teachers can achieve this in lessons.
- Middle leaders make a good contribution to securing pupils' good achievement. For example, the English and mathematics coordinators observe learning in classrooms and check the quality of work in pupils' books. The leader for pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs keeps a careful check on how these pupils are getting on in lessons. She makes sure they receive the right help and that support staff understand how to meet pupils' special needs. For example the small-group work seen by inspectors was carefully planned and resulted in good progress. However, middle leaders do not play as full a part as they could in strategic planning and driving forward whole-school initiatives to secure outstanding achievement for all pupils.
- Academy leaders have made excellent use of the conversion to an academy to broaden the curriculum offered to pupils. The wide range of educational visits combined with some amazing partnership work, for example, with the Globe Theatre and Royal Opera House, provide pupils with wonderful and enriching opportunities to learn about literature and the arts which contribute to their outstanding cultural development. During the inspection it was evident that pupils' musical skills are rapidly improved by the excellent teaching of the steel-pans group. The curriculum offers good opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of democracy and other fundamental British values.
- The academy is beginning to develop its approach to assessment without National Curriculum levels. Leaders and staff are in the process of moving to a new system during the current school year.
- Of the 38 parents who responded via Parent View, the overwhelming majority would recommend the academy to other parents because they are pleased with their children's behaviour and progress. A few raised concerns about homework, behaviour and the quality of information they receive about their children's progress. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection, most of whom were very pleased with the academy. They are especially thrilled with the huge array of clubs in the morning and after school which their children love to attend. These enable parents to continue at work, confident that their children are safe, learning and well looked after.
- The academy uses its pupil premium well and, as a result, those pupils eligible for this additional funding make good progress. Overall there is very little gap between their achievement and that of all pupils. The academy also makes good use of its sports premium money. There is high participation in all sporting activities and pupils' skills have improved as a result of the additional training they receive. The weekly cross-country run is very well attended by staff and pupils. This contributes to a good level of fitness for all.
- Safeguarding processes and procedures meet requirements and, as a result, pupils are safe in the academy. All visitors to the academy are carefully checked and, where required, rigorous checks are carried out to make sure they are suitable to work with pupils.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good understanding of their role and, as a result, make a good contribution to improving pupils' achievement. For example, they hold senior leaders to account through their rigorous questioning when reviewing progress and attainment data and the quality of learning and teaching. However, they are not clear enough about the next steps in securing outstanding provision.
- They keep a sharp eye on the academy budget and make sure additional money, like pupil premium, is used to best effect. They do not sanction higher salaries unless there is clear evidence of improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Governors' vision for what academy status offered to the school and their success in bringing this about has enabled senior leaders to put in place a broad, relevant and exciting curriculum. Governors also ensure that the academy promotes British values and are keen to support the new academy council.
- Although governors know the academy well and can explain what they have done to make sure it provides a good quality of education, their skills are not maximised. Governors could, for example, make decisions that would greatly improve the school's website.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All staff have up-to-date safeguarding training and are confident in their approach to assessing any risks to pupils' health and safety, particularly on the many visits out of school.
- Attendance has made a marked improvement over the last two years and is now close to the national average. The academy has been rightly ruthless in not authorising holidays in school time and staff have worked hard to reduce persistent absence. Senior leaders recognise there is more work to be done to raise attendance further.
- There have been no permanent or fixed term exclusions because of teachers' good behaviour management and the good support they receive from the leader for pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They respect all the adults they work with and are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils walk sensibly around the academy and move in and out of assembly and lessons quietly and carefully. The good relationships established between all adults and pupils in the academy ensure pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development.
- A few parents expressed concerns about bullying. However, nearly every pupil inspectors spoke to stated very definitely that there is no bullying in the academy. As one pupil said, 'I strongly believe everyone would know what to do if they were being bullied because we all have a key worker we are confident to talk to about any problems we have.'
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and, consequently, most learning behaviour in lessons is good. However, when learning activities are not sufficiently challenging especially for most-able pupils, they sometimes lose interest and progress slows.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is having a good impact on pupils' progress. It is clear from the work in pupils' books that teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve and that work is presented neatly and carefully.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they plan interesting learning in lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and are keen to come to school. For example, in a series of lessons about the British democratic system, older pupils have been successfully taught how to write speeches with persuasive arguments. They are able to use these skills well in a debate about local issues.
- Teachers know their pupils well when they join the class at the start of the school year. This is due to the

academy's good system that enables pupils to move into their new classes for a week at the end of the summer term. Teachers set homework for the summer holiday, thus enabling pupils to keep learning during the long summer break. However, teachers do not use pupils' enthusiasm and readiness for learning well enough because they are over cautious when planning learning activities in September. As a result, the most-able pupils do not consistently make rapid progress from their starting points.

- Teaching assistants give good support for pupils' learning in most lessons. They are well trained and teachers explain precisely how they can help pupils to learn better. Very occasionally they are not used well enough during whole-class teaching.
- Teachers' marking in pupils' books helps them to improve their work. Teachers' written comments explain why a piece of work is good and how to make it even better. A few pupils say they cannot always read their teachers' writing.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start in Year 1 with similar skills, knowledge and understanding to that of other pupils of their age in reading, writing and mathematics. National data indicate that pupils' achievement at the end of Year 2 dipped in 2013. The academy's own data and work in pupils' books show that achievement improved rapidly in 2014 as a result of rigorous challenge by senior leaders. National data indicate good achievement in Key Stage 2, with academy data and work in pupils' books showing this has been maintained in 2014.
- The new phonic (the sounds that letters make) programme in Year 1 has had a good impact on pupils' achievement in reading. This programme has now been extended to Year 2 and, consequently, pupils can read a good range of words and use effective strategies when reading unfamiliar words.
- Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make consistently good progress from their starting points. This is because the academy works well in partnership with other professionals to make sure pupils' needs are carefully identified and suitably challenging individual-learning programmes are put in place.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress and the gap in attainment between them and all pupils nationally has narrowed over the last two years in mathematics and English. Academy data and work in pupils' books indicate that this gap closed further for Year 6 in 2014. As a result, most of these pupils catch up with their classmates by the end of Year 6 and are ready for the next stage in their education.
- The most-able pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they should. This is because teachers do not always plan challenging enough activities, especially at the start of the school year.

The early years provision is good

- Most children start the Nursery with the skills, knowledge and understanding expected for their age. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage due to good teaching and exciting learning activities which support their good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. As a result, they are ready to start Year 1.
- Senior leaders have made sure there is a strong team of teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff plan good direct-teaching sessions as well as making sure children have good opportunities to select learning opportunities for themselves. However, teachers do not always prepare suitable questions so that when adults talk to children about their learning during 'choosing' time, they can explore children's ideas and get them to think more deeply. Therefore, the more and most-able children do not always make as much progress as they are capable of.
- Children are kept safe and secure in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They behave well and have good

attitudes to learning because they respect the adults they work with and want to please them.

- Senior leaders make sure there is good day-to-day leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All the teachers have an important part to play and are highly committed to improving provision and further raising children's achievement. They are aware that the most-able children are not always sufficiently challenged and recognise that planning for learning lacks ambition, especially at the start of the school year. Leaders accept the inspection's findings on this matter as an improvement priority.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139106
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	449210

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	533
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Robinson
Principal	Edward Caines
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01375 372513
Email address	principal@woodsideacademy.org

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