

Inspection of The Woodlands Academy

Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 6QN

Inspection dates: 29–30 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe here. The school is calm and friendly. Staff help pupils to understand the importance of being kind to each other. Bullying is not tolerated in any way.

Staff work well together to make sure that pupils are supported to manage their emotions and behaviour. Pupils trust staff and are proud to be a member of the school. Pupils learn quickly how to behave well and told inspectors how, since starting at Woodlands Academy, they now feel part of a school and enjoy learning.

Pupils learn the skills they need in mathematics and personal development. In some other subjects, staff have not planned carefully enough what pupils need to learn. They do not always expect enough of pupils.

Parents speak highly of the school and describe how their child has changed since starting at Woodlands. One parent commented, 'The school has turned my child's life around and given them opportunities to thrive.'

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

Leaders know that the school requires improvement. They know what needs to be done and are starting to make the necessary changes. The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the quality of education, but have not yet had time to make all the changes needed.

Leaders are introducing new plans for what pupils should learn in each subject and when they should learn it. These are developed well in subject like mathematics, personal development and food technology, but are not as well developed in English and other subject areas.

Mathematics lessons are engaging and give pupils the confidence to succeed in mathematics and to apply their learning to real-life situations. For example, older pupils were comparing prices between supermarkets when planning a menu for a café.

The curriculum plans for English are not as clear or coherently sequenced. At individual teacher level there is effective planning for individual outcomes. However, these plans are not yet linked to a whole-school journey through English.

Pupils' workbooks show that they acquire skills over time and are more confident in their functional literacy as a result. However, it is not clear from teachers' assessment whether pupils are learning as much as they could and gaining the best outcome to support future learning and independence. Leaders are aware of this and have purchased a new reading scheme and organised staff training to ensure that pupils make the best progress they can.

The food curriculum is well thought out. Pupils learn about health and safety, different preparation techniques and work with independence to create different dishes. Pupils achieve to diploma level in this subject, preparing them well for further education and employment.

The PSHE curriculum is rich and well organised. It helps to inform pupils about the world they live in and how to keep themselves safe and happy. Pupils are given a range of community-facing activities which help them develop independence and social skills. Independent careers advice is available to pupils. Pupils speak warmly of this advice and are able to speak confidently about future career paths. Only a small number of pupils currently have the chance to undertake work experience. Leaders are planning on widening this offer to more pupils.

Staff have strong, trusting relationships with pupils and want pupils to succeed in all aspects of school life. However, not all teaching is as strong as it could be. In some lessons teachers do not challenge pupils to work on tasks as long as they are able to and allow pupils to move on to unstructured activities too quickly. Learning slows at these times.

The early years curriculum is based on the early years framework, along with specialist teaching approaches. Staff take time and care to get to know the children and how best to support them. They start from the child's interest and, over time, build up the child's communication, interaction, early literacy and numeracy skills. The team works closely with parents to ensure that parents have the right tools to support their child at home. This ensures that children get off to a good start in their education. Leaders are investing in improving the environment. This is because they recognise that the outdoor space and some classroom spaces are not as exciting as they should be for younger children.

Staff told inspectors that leaders listen to them and think about their workload when making decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff take pupils safeguarding seriously. Staff know pupils really well, and report any concerns, however small. Leaders follow up these concerns quickly, and involve outside agencies when they need to.

Staff meet before school each day to make sure that all adults are aware of the needs of individual pupils and how best to support them.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about internet and community safety.

Parents were full of praise for the practical support they receive from the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- After a difficult time when the governing body was reduced in numbers, the governing body is complete. Governors now need to work quickly with the headteacher to establish the best ways to check the effectiveness of school development and improvement.
- The curriculum does not meet pupils needs as well as it should. Some subjects, particularly English, are not well planned. Leaders need to improve the curriculum so that pupils build up a bank of skills and knowledge that will enable them to be successful in their future lives
- Opportunities for key stage 4 pupils to undertake work experience should be further developed. This will allow pupils to apply the skills they have learned in a functional context.
- School leaders should continue to revise the ways in which teachers assess and record pupils' work to enable teachers to identify next steps for pupils. This will also enable pupils to be clear about their progress and what they still need to know and learn.
- School leaders should continue to improve teaching across the school to ensure greater consistency of good practice. This will ensure that all pupils are provided with the right support and challenge for learning.
- The work on improving the physical environment across the school, particularly in early years, should speed up to ensure that all pupils have exciting and interesting learning environments

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	139482
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10110618
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Bernie Weekes
Headteacher	Michelle Hockham
Website	www.woodlands.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school can admit pupils from the age of two to 16. Currently there are five pupils in the early years foundation stage.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2019.
- The majority of governors have recently joined the governing body

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and the chair of governors.
- We reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school, including the single central record and child protection and safeguarding policies. We met with the designated safeguarding lead.

- We took account of 17 recorded responses on Ofsted’s online Parent View survey and 12 free-text comments.
- We also met with a group of eight parents.
- We spoke to pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. We also met more formally with a small group of pupils.
- The views of staff were gathered through meetings with groups of staff.
- We looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, information relating to attendance and behaviour and minutes from governors’ meetings
- We undertook deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, design technology and PSHE. We met with senior leaders and subject teachers. We visited lessons and looked at pupils’ work.

Inspection team

Berni Moorcroft, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Patricia Head

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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