

Inspection of a good school: Woodlands Academy

Beechdale Road, Aspley, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 3EZ

Inspection dates:

5–6 February 2020

Outcome

Woodlands Academy continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They have good relationships with staff and each other. Staff know the pupils well. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils are polite and caring towards each other, staff and visitors. Parents and carers say what a positive difference the school has made to their children's attendance and attitudes to school.

Leaders want pupils to develop their personal, social and emotional skills. Staff are skilled in addressing these needs across different subjects. Pupils learn to talk about their feelings and manage their behaviour. They have regular opportunities to go abroad on residential trips to broaden their knowledge of different countries and cultures.

Pupils and parents say that bullying is rare. When incidents do occur, they are managed well by staff.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. However, leaders do not have a clear overview of the curriculum across different subjects and for all ages. Therefore, they cannot be sure that all pupils get the same opportunities to build on previous learning.

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

Leaders want all pupils to become fluent readers. The school has an attractive library where pupils can read in calm and pleasant surroundings. Pupils read books regularly, and staff read aloud to them every day. Early reading is taught well in some classes, where pupils learn to remember sounds and letters. They learn to write letters that they already know. However, there is a lack of oversight of the teaching of early reading across the school. It is not taught across all ages, and not all teachers have been trained to teach early reading skills. Therefore, some pupils do not get the same opportunity as others to develop their reading skills. Sometimes, pupils' books are too hard for them to

read. They have to work out every word, which inhibits confidence and enjoyment. When pupils are writing, work is not always matched to their abilities. For example, in one task, some pupils were unable to write sentences because they needed help to write individual letters.

The mathematics leader has a clear overview of what pupils should learn across some age groups. This is not the case for all age groups. Leaders are not clear about what pupils' next steps should be. Teachers are using a new mathematics scheme that helps them to sequence learning and plan lessons carefully around the needs of pupils. Teachers modify the scheme so that they can revisit learning to enable pupils to practise what they learn before moving on. Pupils are grouped so that teachers can support their needs more effectively. Staff use practical resources to help some pupils. Teachers refer back to earlier work to check that pupils have remembered what they have learned.

There is a clear purpose to the curriculum for physical education (PE), and teachers have strong subject knowledge. Plans show how learning is sequenced to develop different physical skills. However, staff are not clear about what pupils should understand at key points so that they know and remember more. Teachers have made changes to plans to help pupils build their confidence. They adapt lessons to meet the pupils' different physical needs.

Trustees at the multi-academy trust do not have a sharp enough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not held leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are trained to spot the signs of abuse. Staff understand the clear procedures for sharing concerns. When staff share concerns, leaders respond promptly. Leaders work closely with other agencies, such as social care, to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

Teachers use assemblies to talk to pupils about how to keep themselves safe, for example when using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Trustees do not have a good enough understanding of the school's weaknesses. They should ensure that plans to appoint a local governing body to hold leaders to account effectively are enacted well.
- Leaders are not clear enough about how the school should improve. They do not make clear enough the specific changes they wish to see. Leaders should be clear in their plans for improvements and hold staff better to account.

- Leaders have not ensured that curriculum plans for all subjects set out what pupils should know and by when. Staff are not as clear as they should be about the best way to sequence pupils' learning over time. Sometimes, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans clearly set out the knowledge pupils need to learn and by when. Leaders should ensure that staff have the expertise they need to plan work that is appropriately demanding for all pupils. Leaders must check that this is happening.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff have the expertise they need to make sure that the teaching of reading is consistent and focused and builds on what pupils know. Leaders should check more carefully that there is a logical and well-understood approach to the teaching of early reading throughout the school, and that books and tasks are matched well to pupils' abilities. They should ensure that staff have the training and support they need to deliver the reading curriculum well.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Woodlands School, to be good on 2–3 February 2016.

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	144321
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10121246
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tom Shaw
Principal	Andrew Morgan (acting principal)
Website	www.woodlandssch.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy.

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy school on 3 April 2017. When its predecessor school, Woodlands School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Raleigh Learning Trust.
- The acting principal was appointed in November 2019.
- The school uses three alternative providers. These are Real Education, Nottingham Education and Progression to Work.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, autism spectrum disorder, speech, language and communication needs, severe learning disabilities and moderate learning disabilities.

Information about this inspection

- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics and PE. We met subject leaders, visited lessons and scrutinised samples of pupils' work alongside senior leaders.
- We held meetings with the acting principal, senior leaders, teachers, trustees and parents.

- We spoke with groups of pupils from key stages 2, 3 and 4. We also talked informally with other pupils.
- We took account of the six responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and considered the one free-text comment.
- We evaluated a range of documents related to safeguarding, and looked at information on the school’s website.

Inspection team

Julian Scholefield, lead inspector

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