

# Inspection of Woodlands Academy

Partney Road, Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 5EJ

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Inspection dates:

16 to 18 November 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils say that school often feels 'chaotic'. Leaders have not managed to recruit and keep enough staff. Pupils have to take it in turns to stay at school because there are not enough staff to teach and supervise them. On occasion, the school has had to close completely. Pupils do not always get work to complete when they are sent home. Many struggle to learn without adult support.

Too often, learning is disrupted by poor behaviour. Some pupils refuse to carry out instructions. Some go missing from lessons. Leaders and staff do not ensure that pupils are well supervised when they are at school. Too many pupils are absent from school too often.

Pupils say that staff do not always resolve incidents of bullying. They are not all confident that staff will take their concerns seriously. Some pupils use derogatory language towards others. When staff hear this, they usually reprimand pupils.

There are few opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents, or to contribute to their communities. Pupils do not have a secure understanding of fundamental British values.

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

Disruptions to teaching, poor attendance and poor behaviour leave pupils with widening gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

The curriculum is not ambitious enough. In some subjects, teachers have thought carefully about the knowledge they want pupils to learn and when. Other curriculum plans do not identify what pupils must know, or by when. The shortage of staff means that teachers often do not deliver the planned curriculum. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Not all teachers consider pupils' needs carefully enough. They move the learning on before checking whether pupils have understood. Teachers use their subject knowledge to ask appropriate questions. However, they do not provide consistently clear feedback to pupils that tells them how to get better at a subject.

Pupils who have fallen behind in reading learn how to sound out unfamiliar words. Leaders track these pupils' progress closely. They make sure that they get the help they need to read fluently and confidently.

The plans to help staff manage pupils' behaviour do not include all the information they should. Pupils' poor behaviour stops them and others from learning. Leaders do not respond consistently to incidents of poor conduct.

When pupils return to school, following an exclusion, leaders do not support them well enough. They do not review this support, to check whether it is effective. Actions to improve pupils' attendance are having a limited impact.

The school does not prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils do not learn about different faiths and beliefs. Some say that they do not have opportunities to discuss their ideas and share their opinions. The school teaches pupils about different career choices. Younger pupils receive careers guidance through the programme for personal, social, health and economic education. Older pupils receive individual advice and guidance related to their career plans. Year 10 pupils benefit from a work placement related to their career aspirations. Leaders continue to support pupils with their next steps after they leave school.

Many staff have concerns about the leadership of the school. The staff shortage is having a negative impact on staff well-being and morale.

Senior leaders lack the capacity to improve the school. They do not have an accurate understanding of the school's weaknesses. They have plans to improve the school, but these miss out the key areas that need to get better. Trustees are poorly informed about leaders' work. They have not made sure that pupils are safe in school.

Trust leaders have not been effective in recruiting and holding on to well-trained staff. They do not make sure that all pupils receive a full-time education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Many staff are concerned about the safety of pupils. One stated, 'I feel we don't have enough staff to keep pupils or staff safe.'

Leaders do not check that pupils are safe when they are not in class. Temporary staff do not know how to raise any concerns they may have.

Pupils' risk assessments do not identify actions that will protect them from harm. When serious incidents occur, leaders do not make the necessary adjustments to these risk assessments. Risk assessments are not shared with staff or pupils.

Safeguarding records are disorganised. Some do not make clear what actions leaders have taken in response to safeguarding concerns.

There are gaps in pupils' learning about how to stay safe. They learn how to stay safe online and about the risks of using illegal substances. They are not taught about potential risks in the local community, for example from criminal exploitation.

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

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

- Trustees have not ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. There are too many weaknesses that leave pupils potentially unsafe. Trustees need to fulfil their responsibilities, establish effective systems and embed a secure culture of safeguarding.
- Trust leaders have not taken timely and effective action to recruit and retain well-trained staff. Pupils do not receive their entitlement to full-time education. Staffing shortages place additional pressure on existing staff. This is having a detrimental impact on their morale and well-being. Trust leaders must appoint sufficient new staff so that pupils can attend school on site full time. Trust leaders must provide all staff with the right training and support to encourage them to stay in post.
- There is limited leadership capacity to improve the school. Trust leaders have not identified weakness in the quality of the provision quickly enough. Trustees have not held leaders to account for their actions. Senior leaders need to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately and implement strategic plans to bring about rapid improvements.
- Pupils' risk assessments lack detail and many of them are out of date. They do not help to keep pupils safe. Risk assessments for the site are not adequate. Leaders need to ensure that risk assessments include relevant detail, are up to date and are available for staff to use so they can keep pupils safe.
- Pupils' poor behaviour is disrupting their and others' learning. Some pupils are disrespectful towards others. Pupils' behaviour management plans omit important information. Leaders need to support staff to eradicate disruptive and disrespectful behaviour. They need to ensure that plans to support individual pupils accurately reflect each pupil's needs.
- Many pupils experience a disjointed curriculum. Absences, school closures and disruptive behaviour leave pupils with gaps in their learning. In some subjects, what pupils need to know is not specified clearly or arranged logically in the curriculum plans. Pupils do not secure the knowledge they need in each subject. Leaders need to remove any barriers so that pupils can benefit from a well-planned and effectively implemented curriculum in all subjects.
- Some pupils are reluctant to talk to staff about their worries. They do not think that staff will always take their concerns seriously. Leaders need to ensure that all staff respond appropriately to pupils' concerns and worries.
- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders need to work with parents and carers to challenge and support them to help their children attend school regularly.
- Leaders have not done enough to make sure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils leave the school ill equipped to become good citizens. Leaders must provide pupils with opportunities to engage with a wide set of

experiences. They must help pupils to understand the importance of fundamental British values.

- It is recommended that the school does not appoint early career teachers.

## 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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142510
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10209729
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	71
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Steve Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alice Eyre
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woodlands-cit.co.uk">www.woodlands-cit.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher and assistant headteacher took up their respective positions in June 2020.
- Since the previous inspection, new curriculum leaders of English, mathematics and science have been appointed.
- The school provides education for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some of these pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers. These are Black Barn Farm and Sunset Farm.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Inspectors deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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.

- The inspection was carried out following a complaint to Ofsted that raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether there was a culture of effective safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and trust representatives, including the chief executive officer, the director of education, the director of safeguarding and an executive headteacher.
- The lead inspector met with safeguarding leaders to discuss safeguarding. She looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. Information relating to site security was considered.
- Inspectors did deep dives in four subjects: mathematics, science, history, and design and technology. They met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils and met with teachers of the lessons visited. Inspectors also reviewed curriculum plans and samples of pupils' workbooks for geography and information technology.
- Inspectors spoke with some pupils about reading and listened to them read.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke with other pupils informally. They observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- The lead inspector met with a trustee and with the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke on the telephone with representatives of the two unregistered alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the survey for staff and the pupils' survey. They spoke with one parent. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's plans for improvement and information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and exclusions.

### **Inspection team**

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jackie Thornalley

Ofsted Inspector



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