

Inspection of Woodhouse Academy

Woodhouse Lane, Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST8 7DR

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Woodhouse Academy is a caring school with a calm and respectful atmosphere. Pupils feel happy and safe here. They attend regularly and feel well supported by staff. Bullying is rare. Staff work alongside pupils to resolve issues that do occur.

Staff know pupils well. They want the best for every pupil and expectations are high. Pupils understand and respond well to these high expectations. They behave well around the school and work hard in lessons.

Teachers ensure that lessons are well planned. They challenge pupils to develop new knowledge in every lesson. Pupils rise to this challenge, showing pride in their work. They contribute thoughtfully to class discussions and show determination when completing independent tasks.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Examples include sports, robotics, gardening, drama, dance and languages clubs. Pupils appreciate these opportunities and talk enthusiastically about participating in them.

The majority of parents and carers would recommend the school to others. They praise leadership, quality of teaching, pastoral care and the range of extra-curricular activities. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'Strong leadership is evident, with a perfect balance of focus on performance and personal growth in a caring culture.'

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

Leaders regularly review all key aspects of the school. As a result, they have an accurate view of the school's many strengths, while focusing on making improvements where they are needed. Governors work well with leaders, providing an effective balance of support and challenge.

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders and trustees have thought carefully about the subjects that pupils study. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow a broad and balanced curriculum. Subject leaders regularly work alongside local first schools and the high school to plan the curriculum's content. This ensures that pupils cover the full national curriculum across key stage 2 and key stage 3.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They use this to plan lessons effectively. They regularly use assessment strategies to check pupils' understanding. However, there is some variability in how well teachers use these strategies to help pupils to improve their work.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the SEND department team know pupils with SEND very well. They regularly assess pupils' needs and plan additional sessions to support pupils to make progress. Examples include daily

reading and numeracy support sessions. Information about these pupils' learning needs is shared with staff. Many teachers use this information to adapt lessons for pupils with SEND. However, some teachers do not take sufficient account of this information when planning lessons. Consequently, some pupils with SEND find it difficult to access learning in some lessons.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils reading regularly. All pupils read in school each day as a part of the planned curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read benefit from additional support through the schools' reading support programme.

Leaders ensure that all pupils have a wide range of personal development opportunities. There is a carefully planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme in place. Lessons cover areas such as healthy relationships, personal finance and cultural diversity. Pupils also learn about the world of work, and by year 8, are starting to consider possible future careers before moving to high school. All pupils participate in at least one educational trip each year, while the vast majority also participate in at least one extra-curricular activity.

Staff are proud to work in the school. They express confidence in the school's leader, saying that they feel trusted and well supported. They say that leaders consider their workload when planning for school improvement and their day-to-day work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the school has a strong safeguarding culture. All staff complete regular safeguarding training, supplemented by weekly updates. Safeguarding concerns are quickly identified and followed up. Leaders work with families and a range of agencies to put additional support in place where it is needed.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe. They are clear about what procedures to follow if they have a concern about themselves or someone else. They are confident that there is always an adult they can talk to if they have a concern and that they will get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, assessment strategies are underdeveloped. This means that pupils are not always supported to improve their understanding. Leaders should ensure that assessment strategies in all subjects support pupils to learn the curriculum.
- Some teachers do not make sufficient use of the information they receive about the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, lessons are not always adapted sufficiently to take the learning needs of these pupils into account. Leaders should

ensure that all teachers use the information provided to plan lessons that support the learning needs of pupils with SEND.

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](#)' 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	141074
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256888
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	431
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nicola Perkin
Principal	Deborah Farr
Website	www.woodhouseacademy.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- Leaders work alongside the local high school to meet the requirements of the Baker Clause. This 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 graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the SENCo. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff and governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, science, religious education and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited a range of other lessons and activities outside the deep dive subjects. These included design technology, physical education, reading support and extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy, spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of the free-text comments and the responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Eddie Wilkes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Wakefield	Ofsted Inspector

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