

Inspection of a good school: Woodkirk Academy

Rein Road, Tingley, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF3 1JQ

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

Woodkirk Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and feel safe at Woodkirk Academy. Pupils and staff are committed to the school ethos of 'be kind, work hard and take responsibility'. This shines through in all aspects of school life. Respectful, positive relationships are at the heart of this school. Pupils know that staff value them and care about their education. They feel comfortable asking for extra help or support if needed.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve academic success. Pupils study a broad curriculum in key stages 3 and 4, which gives them a strong foundation for further study or training post-16. Leaders are equally ambitious for pupils to experience a range of opportunities outside the classroom. They take steps to make sure each pupil can take part in a residential experience, a university visit and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme in key stage 3. There are many other extra-curricular clubs and visits.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They have created a behaviour system that pupils understand, and staff use consistently. The majority of pupils at Woodkirk Academy behave sensibly and meet the high standards teachers expect of them. Pupils respond to staff instructions. Learning is not often disrupted in the classroom. Bullying rarely happens. When it does, leaders take swift action.

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

Leaders provide pupils with a high-quality education. They have developed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum, including in the sixth form. All pupils follow the same curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Subject leaders and teachers are passionate about their subject. They use their expertise to identify the precise knowledge pupils need to learn at each stage. This ensures that pupils build what they know and remember in a logical way. This helps pupils to achieve very well.

Leaders are unrelenting in their ambition to equip pupils with a broad range of skills and knowledge that will support them to succeed in later life. This is reflected in the very high proportion of pupils at key stage 4 who study the English Baccalaureate subjects.

During lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding using questioning and 'live' marking. They spot misconceptions in pupils' learning and address any errors straight away. However, leaders' use of assessment to understand how well pupils are retaining knowledge and skills over time is inconsistent. In some subjects, such as mathematics, leaders use assessment to pinpoint areas of weakness in pupils' knowledge and skills. They then adapt the curriculum to close these identified gaps in learning. However, in other subjects, assessment is not as systematic and methodical. It does not contribute as well to pupils' learning.

Leaders appreciate the importance of reading, both for pupils' achievement and their enjoyment. Pupils who are not yet confident readers are supported through intervention programmes carefully matched to their needs. Leaders are thorough in checking the impact of these programmes to ensure that pupils become fluent readers.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons. Leaders have set out school rules which reflect their high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teachers use the behaviour system consistently to ensure that pupils' learning is not disturbed. A small number of pupils find it difficult to follow the school rules and, therefore, miss some lesson time. This has resulted in an increase in the number of suspensions and 'on-call' removal of pupils from lessons this year.

The personal, social, health, religious education (PSHRE) curriculum extends from Year 7 to Year 13. Pupils learn about important issues, such as discrimination, online safety and healthy relationships. Leaders have considered the risks which pupils face at particular points in their lives. This is reflected in the PSHRE curriculum. For example, sixth-form students learn about driving safely and risk-taking behaviour at festivals. Leaders are committed to broadening pupils' horizons. There is a plethora of clubs, trips and visits on offer to develop pupils' character and independence. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. This prepares them for life in modern Britain well.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, receive high-quality careers guidance from the moment they join Woodkirk Academy. Through university visits, talks from professionals and work experience, pupils are fully prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. Sixth-form students feel exceptionally well supported by their teachers. They said that teachers are approachable and 'go the extra mile' to help them.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel valued and appreciate the high-quality professional development they receive from the trust. Governors and trustees are knowledgeable. Through link monitoring visits, they hold leaders to account and provide support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are acutely aware of the local risks that pupils face. They are quick to identify any pupils at risk of harm. Leaders work proactively with a range of external agencies to safeguard pupils. Staff receive training on a range of safeguarding issues throughout the year. They know how to report signs that a pupil may need extra help.

Pupils learn about potential risks. They know how to seek help if they need it. Leaders carry out the necessary checks to ensure adults working with pupils are suitable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to checking what pupils know and remember is inconsistent. In some subjects, teachers do not use this information to inform future learning. This prevents pupils from building on secure prior knowledge. Leaders should develop consistent and purposeful assessment systems to ensure pupils retain important knowledge.
- A significant minority of pupils spend time out of lessons due to poor behaviour. This means that they are missing valuable learning. Leaders should further refine the work they are doing with these pupils in order to support them to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour in order to ensure these pupils access their full learning entitlement.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

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	137383
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10240471
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,846
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	319
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Russell Naglis
Principal	Timothy Jones
Website	http://www.woodkirkacademy.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average sized secondary school.
- The school is part of Leodis Academies Trust.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at four registered providers: Footsteps Children's Centre, John Jamieson School, Southway Independant School and The Stephen Longfellow Academy.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, chief executive officer, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing board and trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in history, mathematics and modern foreign languages. They visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding, looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' records of checks on the suitability of adults working with pupils. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about leaders' work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for pupils and staff. They also considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and additional communications from parents. Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Kate Morris, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
John Linkins	His Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Voyce	His Majesty's Inspector

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