

# Inspection of a good school: Woodside Academy

Colyers Lane, Erith, Kent DA8 3PB

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 June 2023

## Outcome

Woodside Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy days full of learning adventures at Woodside Academy. Teachers make sure there is a calm, caring atmosphere where pupils feel safe and confident to be themselves and develop their unique personalities.

Leaders are unrelentingly ambitious for pupils' learning and personal development. They ensure there is a superb range of activities, clubs and experiences which are adapted to meet the wide range of pupils' needs here. The 'Woodside Challenge' programme is successful in helping pupils learn important skills such as how to get help if they become lost.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is impeccable. They become completely absorbed because they understand exactly what they are supposed to be learning. Staff are exceptionally skilled in judging how to give pupils time to refocus when their needs require this without letting them off the hook. Bullying is rare, and pupils feel confident about how leaders deal with it. Some pupils are 'positivity ambassadors'. They play a valuable role in creating a positive culture where any form of unkind or hurtful behaviour is not tolerated.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly appreciative of how well staff understand their children and enable them to thrive. Some commented how their child's life has been transformed for the better since attending Woodside.

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

The curriculum is consistently well led and successfully designed. Senior leaders provide innovative and creative opportunities for staff to develop their subject leadership and share their expertise. This contributes very effectively to the consistently strong subject knowledge of staff.

Pupils achieve very well. There is a particularly successful focus on making sure pupils learn skills which prepare them for greater independence and the responsibilities of adulthood. For example, older pupils learn how to ask and respond to questions so that they can communicate more clearly and confidently.

Leaders are determined that pupils will learn to read independently and discover the enjoyment books can bring. They have focused sharply on streamlining the phonics programme and the expertise of staff in teaching it. As a result, teachers typically make accurate decisions about which books pupils should use to learn phonics from. They are becoming more skilled in identifying gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge and providing the right support to help them catch up. Pupils all get to hear an adult read books to them that they may not be able to understand on their own. This opens up a wider world of literature and ideas to them, which significantly enhances their love of reading.

In other subjects, such as art, pupils' knowledge builds up over time because leaders have set out the curriculum in a logical order. For example, children in the early years begin to learn about printmaking by designing and making simple print blocks. They go on in later years to design more complicated motifs and print patterns inspired by famous artists who have used similar methods.

In mathematics, teachers make it crystal-clear what pupils are learning about. Leaders and teachers tailor the curriculum to individual pupils so that pupils can recognise when they have learned something new and understand how mathematics is useful in their lives.

Leaders ensure that pupils' wider development is given high priority. Pupils revisit themes and ideas over time so that they can build on previous learning. Where necessary, pupils use communication aids to participate in discussions and express their points of view. A range of resources supports pupils' identity and sense of community. Students in the sixth form enjoy volunteering in the community, such as at a local garden centre. Students make successful transitions to college or training and employment placements. Leaders stay in touch with them and offer support to sustain these placements if necessary.

Pupils behave thoughtfully towards one another, including when at play and lunchtime. They help each other out. Children in the early years independently offer to help adults with putting things away.

Staff enjoy working here and appreciate the opportunities available for their own professional development. They feel part of the team and value the way leaders try not to overburden them with administrative tasks all at once.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors keep a robust oversight of checks on the suitability of staff. They also manage procedures for investigating concerns thoroughly. They are mindful of risks

associated with pupils' limited communication skills and tailor staff training to support this.

Leaders make sure professionals from other services such as health and social care contribute to the work to protect vulnerable pupils from harm.

Staff keep up to date through the local area safeguarding network. This includes, for example, information about the latest online risks and how to help pupils avoid these.

## 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Woodside School, to be good in November 2018.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146885
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268472
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	198
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sam Parrett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathryn Freame
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woodside.bexley.sch.uk/">www.woodside.bexley.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Woodside Academy converted to become an academy school in April 2019. When its predecessor school, Woodside School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school caters for pupils who have autism and moderate learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is part of the London South East Academies Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## 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 senior leaders and those with responsibilities for aspects of the school's provision, such as attendance.
- When considering safeguarding, inspectors met with safeguarding leaders and scrutinised the school's policies and record-keeping systems. They also spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, English and personal, social, health and economic education. Deep dives included discussions about the curriculum with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with teachers and pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer for the trust, trustees and governors. Inspectors also met with a senior representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the staff responses to the Ofsted survey and the written views contributed to Ofsted Parent View by parents during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to some parents at the beginning of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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