

Inspection of Woodeaton Manor School

Woodeaton, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 9TS

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not receive an acceptable standard of education at Woodeaton Manor. The school is often chaotic and staff are not supported well enough to provide the nurture, care and professionally informed approach that pupils need.

Staff expectations of pupils' behaviour are too low and staff do not routinely challenge pupils' unsafe behaviour. While some pupils are polite and well mannered, others are wilfully disruptive and often violent towards each other and staff. This makes other pupils and staff feel intimidated and anxious. A lack of formal training and professional knowledge means that adults are ill-equipped to respond effectively when pupils' behaviour is unacceptable. The school does not deal effectively with the serious concerns that staff and pupils raise.

Leaders and governors have not acted quickly enough to stem the decline in standards in the school since the last inspection. Pupils' safety is sometimes put at risk because the school's policies and procedures are not embedded or followed consistently by staff.

Pupils are ambitious and want to succeed. They enjoy some of the enrichment activities that are provided for them. However, these activities, such as seeing popular films in the cinema during the day, are often of little educational value. Several pupils are looking forward to college placements and moving on to their next steps. However, pupils do not achieve well enough because of the underdeveloped curriculum and ineffective teaching. Furthermore, pastoral care fails to meet pupils' complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

The school has suffered from turbulence in leadership over the past year. There have been some revisions to the curriculum recently. However, the curriculum is not fit for purpose because it does not meet the complex needs of pupils. In a few subjects, there is appropriate consideration of knowledge sequencing and content. However, in most, leaders have not planned suitable learning for pupils with different levels of need.

Teaching and the support of pupils' learning is weak. Teachers are often not able to promote effective learning because classrooms are unruly. In addition, the planned curriculum is often too easy or too difficult for pupils to understand. Learning activities and pupil support are not designed with the needs of pupils with complex SEND in mind. Consequently, pupils do not achieve well.

The school does not ensure that staff are trained sufficiently well to understand how pupils with SEND learn best. Staff do not have a secure understanding about how to respond properly to extremely poor behaviour. Poorly trained and inappropriately deployed additional adults are not able to support pupils effectively.

Staff are not aware of the agreed ways of supporting pupils that are outlined in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Although newly appointed leaders have made some improvements in a short time, EHC plans are not routinely used to inform how teachers teach pupils or how additional adults support them.

Teachers in some subjects, such as physical education (PE) and mathematics, assess what pupils know and understand in lessons and at different points of the year. However, the systems used by staff do not help them to plan future learning or set longer term goals for pupils based on their particular needs.

The school does not prioritise reading. A recently renewed approach to reading has not yet been put into practice. Consequently, pupils who need support in learning to read do not receive the help that they need.

The school's behaviour policy is not embedded or understood widely. This results in an inconsistent approach to modifying and improving pupils' behaviour. Although pupils attend school regularly, many choose not to be in lessons and wander the school, sometimes unsupervised. This has led to pupils absconding from school and being placed in unsafe situations. Prior to March 2023, the school illegally suspended pupils, labelling days where pupils had been told to stay at home as 'mental health days'. This practice has now ceased.

Pupils do not have access to enough clubs or activities during social times or after school. Leaders are currently at the start of embedding new elements of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) and some pupils remember important messages from their assemblies about consent or from tutor periods where they have discussed relationship and sex education. However, the overall PSHE curriculum is not fit for purpose. School trips are not coordinated to enrich pupils' talents and interests.

Staff are concerned about staff shortages, physical violence towards themselves and others by pupils. There is a lack of support from leaders and a lack of training that would help them to support pupils whose needs have become more complex since the last inspection.

Governance oversight of leaders' actions is not effective. Serious lapses in safeguarding practices have been allowed to persist and leaders have not been challenged or held to account well enough in the past. Governor oversight in governance meetings lacks rigour and they have not been effective in ensuring that leaders fulfil their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders' actions have not created a safe environment for pupils or staff. Consequently, staff and pupils frequently experience verbal and physical abuse. Staff have little faith that this abuse will be dealt with effectively when they report it.

Since the last inspection, a small number of staff have been employed without the proper checks taking place. Recent improvements have ensured that suitable employment checks now take place for members of staff.

The school site is not safe or secure. Pupils have absconded from school and placed themselves in unsafe situations. Too many pupils regularly wander the school corridors and grounds during the school day. Leaders have begun to tackle this issue recently. However, their responses to a problem that has persisted for over a year have been too slow.

Leaders and governors have not ensured that record-keeping of allegations made against members of staff is robust. There have been recent improvements in this area. However, the school holds no records for referrals made to the local authority prior to March 2023. When allegations have come to light more recently, actions taken are not recorded appropriately.

The school does not provide the necessary oversight or care for pupils who attend alternative provision. Few checks are made about the welfare of these pupils. As a result, leaders are not clear about how well they are attending, progressing or if they are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils, whether attending school regularly or not, are not safe. The school must take immediate action to ensure that the site is safe and pupils are supervised appropriately, particularly if they do not attend lessons.
- The school must improve the processes staff follow to keep pupils safe when they are educated at alternative provisions.
- Many staff at the school do not feel safe. Leaders must improve their oversight and management of safeguarding concerns reported by staff, so that they protect staff from harm and ensure they feel listened to. Leaders should also appropriately manage allegations about members of staff.
- The school's behaviour policy and procedures do not promote acceptable behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is often chaotic and sometimes violent. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy is reviewed and strengthened, so that staff and pupils have a clear understanding of the school's behaviour expectations. Leaders should ensure that staff acquire the necessary training to be able to respond to poor behaviour effectively and that positive relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils, are promoted effectively.
- The curriculum is not ambitious enough and does not meet the needs of pupils. Furthermore, teaching is not strong enough to ensure that pupils deepen their understanding across subjects. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders must develop a clear and ambitious ethos for the quality of

education. This should include a review of the content and sequence of learning in the curriculum, so that pupils progress through the curriculum purposefully and achieve well. Leaders should consider how pupils with SEND learn best and the level at which teachers need to design learning for pupils with differing levels of need. Staff should be supported by professional development based around delivering high-quality learning that meets the needs of pupils with SEND.

- The important information in pupils' EHC plans is not understood well by staff. Leaders should ensure that staff understand the strategies and approaches agreed by the school, in conjunction with external professionals, so that staff respond to pupils' needs more effectively and professionally.
- Governors have overseen a decline in the standards in the school and have not ensured that leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Governors need to hold leaders to account stringently and assure themselves by using evidence from a range of sources, that standards are improving rapidly.
- Planning for pupils' personal development is not consistently in place. This means that opportunities for pupils to explore the personal, social and health aspects of their education and develop their talents and interests are not regular and consistent. Pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders should improve personal development and the opportunities for enrichment within the curriculum.
- The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	123329
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10317634
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carol Brennan and Phil Garratt (Co-chairs of the governing body)
Headteacher	Simon Bishop
Website	www.woodeaton.oxon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Woodeaton Manor caters for 92 mixed gender pupils between the ages of 7 and 18. All pupils have an EHC plan for social, emotional and mental health difficulties and/or associated needs. Many pupils also have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative education providers and five unregistered alternative education providers.
- The school is currently registered to provide education to 16- to 18-year-olds. There is currently one member of the school's sixth form.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 consultant interim headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with the co-chairs and a member of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- An inspector spoke by telephone with representatives of a selection of the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from each year group.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding arrangements, including the school's central record of employment checks. Inspectors spoke to a variety of staff to check how well safeguarding referrals and systems work.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school site during lunchtimes and at break.
- The inspection team considered the views given by parents, staff and pupils through Ofsted surveys.
- The lead inspector took into account school documents and other published information from the school's website.

Inspection team

Harry Ingham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Aimee Floyd

His Majesty's Inspector

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