

Inspection of a good school: Woodside Academy

Grangewood Avenue, Little Thurrock, Grays, Essex RM16 2GJ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

Outcome

Woodside Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Edward Caines. The school is a single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Justin Conroy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of the Woodside community, and rightly so. Pupils identify key adults they could talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils learn how to care for each other. They are accepting of others who are different from themselves. They say this is what makes them unique. Pupils are happy at school and are safe.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. From the early years, children and pupils work hard and try their best. They are inquisitive learners and have a thirst to find out more. Pupils achieve well in end-of-key-stage tests and assessments.

Pupils relish the opportunity to participate in the extensive range of experiences offered by the school. For example, pupils learn to play gamelan instruments and steel pans. They have received national awards in recognition of their skills and achievements. This work helps to develop a better understanding of the international community. Pupils build independence through different visits. Year 6 pupils look forward to the residential week where they can experience new activities for the first time.

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

The school has carefully considered what they want pupils to learn. The curriculum reflects opportunities for pupils to find out more about their locality. The school has chosen to do this through topics and themes. For example, pupils study local buildings to understand how the area has changed over time. Pupils learn key information in order to deepen their understanding of important concepts. Frequent opportunities to revisit previous learning help them to recall knowledge. However, this is not consistent in every subject. A few subject plans are not as precise in how knowledge is broken into

manageable steps. This leads to inconsistencies in how the subject is taught. As a result, pupils' learning is not as strong as it should be.

Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They use this effectively when asking questions to check pupils' understanding. This ensures any misconceptions are addressed. In early years, adults skilfully work alongside children. They prompt and question children to promote their exploration of learning. Children use key words well to explain what they are doing.

Staff understand how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use information from pupils' learning plans to adapt their learning. This ensures pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers.

There is a high priority placed on reading at the school. The school has taken prompt action to address poor outcomes in phonics. There are new approaches to teach early reading. There is an emphasis upon pupils keeping up with the sounds they should know. Timely interventions and extra help provide the support pupils need to develop their reading accuracy. Older pupils enjoy reading too. Pupils act as reading mentors to help others with recommendations of their favourite books. A weekly reading raffle encourages pupils to read frequently.

The school is calm, and classrooms are purposeful. Routines and rules are well established. Pupils enjoy trusting relationships with adults, creating a nurturing and supportive environment. Pupils want to learn. They attend well, reflecting that they want to be at school. The school ensures that any who struggle to attend school regularly receive the support and help they need.

Pupils' wider development is at the heart of the school. The school ensures that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, access a comprehensive range of opportunities. Pupils develop an understanding of important ideas such as democracy and mutual respect. They readily take on roles and responsibilities to build a sense of community. For example, school councillors look to improve the school in different ways. Mental health champions support the well-being of their peers. House captains act as good role models for others.

The trustees take responsibility for the governance of school. They are ambitious for pupils to do well. Staff appreciate the training they receive to help them understand their roles. However, governors do not fully check the effectiveness of all the curriculum through their quality assurance approaches. This means they do not have a secure understanding of how well leaders implement their curriculum programmes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few curriculum areas, the precise knowledge pupils need to learn is not clear. This means that pupils do not fully remember what they have learned previously. The school should ensure that all their subject plans include all the key steps that secure pupils' understanding.
- Governors do not fully check how the school's vision and aims are achieved through the curriculum. This means they do not have all the information they need to hold leaders to account. Governors should develop further their knowledge and skills to ensure the school's performance is highly effective.

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 September 2014.

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	139106
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10323726
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	665
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Justin Conroy
Principal	Edward Caines
Website	www.woodsideacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	18 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school opened as a single-trust academy in December 2012.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, vice principal, assistant principals, curriculum leaders and teachers. The lead inspector met with three trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with

leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a range of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders and staff; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through their responses to the online survey and parents' free-text comments. They also met informally with parents as they collected their children from school. Inspectors also considered responses to the Ofsted staff survey and to the responses on the pupil survey. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Fykin

Ofsted Inspector

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