

# Inspection of Woodlands Academy

Beechdale Road, Aspley, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 3EZ

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Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Andrew Morgan. This school is part of the Raleigh Education Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sean Kelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Eileen Hartley.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive and are happy at this caring, welcoming school. They treat one another with respect and greet visitors warmly. In lessons, they are eager, confident learners who have highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils typically praise the school for its 'respectful atmosphere' and the kindness of staff. The small teaching groups provide pupils with the individual attention that helps them to learn.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. They understand and respect the school's three 'golden rules' that help to keep them safe. The school supports pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs very well. Trained staff provide sensitive guidance and support for any pupils who require practical help or who simply need to talk. If a pupil struggles to control their emotions, staff calmly step in to offer support. This helps pupils to stay safe and return to learning when they are ready.

The school provides an exceptional range of opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development, including, for example, through choir performances in the city, residential experiences, local walks, community ventures and art exhibitions. There is a notable tradition of international journeys to Poland and Egypt. These cultural opportunities encourage independence and nurture pupils' talents exceptionally well.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has revised the curriculum in all areas. This has included the introduction of three curriculum pathways. Pupils are placed in the yellow, green or blue pathway according to the complexity of their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Currently, the school is reviewing and refining a small number of subjects to ensure that pupils achieve as highly as possible across the curriculum.

Within each pathway, the curriculum is carefully sequenced so that pupils gain increasingly secure knowledge and skills. There is a constant focus on preparing pupils for adulthood and their next steps beyond the school. To that end, pupils access courses that closely match their interests and abilities and promote independence. This may include working towards a range of accreditations and formal qualifications or gaining valuable workplace experience. The school works effectively with an ever-increasing network of further education providers and employers.

The school prioritises communication and reading. There is a systematic approach to teaching early reading and phonics. Well-trained staff provide consistent teaching. Pupils read from books that match the sounds they know. They develop well as increasingly fluent readers. Pupils who communicate by methods such as signing, or symbols, receive equally skilled support. The whole school benefits from learning new signs in the weekly celebration assembly.

In mathematics, pupils in all three pathways engage in well-planned learning activities that are tailored to their additional needs. Staff are ambitious for pupils to achieve. They deftly adapt their teaching to respond to any misunderstandings.

The school has identified the broader assessment of pupils' achievement as an area for development. There is a particular focus on ensuring that the pupils in the yellow pathway, who have the most complex needs, fulfil their potential. However, the school does not track pupils' achievements in relation to the targets from their education, health and care (EHC) plans closely enough. Broad targets from the EHC plans are not systematically broken down into small, achievable steps that can be shared with staff who support individuals.

The school has high expectations for behaviour and attendance. An atmosphere of calm and purpose permeates the school. Decisions around the use of alternative provision are taken in pupils' best interests. School and trust leaders work highly effectively as a team to monitor and reduce absences, involving external professionals when appropriate.

The school's unique 'life skills' curriculum promotes pupils' personal development exceptionally well, alongside the 'Five Cs' school values. As a result, pupils become respectful, well-informed young citizens. They demonstrate strong understanding of fairness, equality, and important values such as democracy.

Leadership at all levels is strong, including governance. Staff highly value the training they receive, and the support for their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school does not identify and track as precisely as it could pupils' achievements in relation to the broad targets in their EHC plans. This means that staff do not receive clear guidance on how the broad targets these pupils have in their plans may be broken down into achievable steps of progress. This hinders the school's overview of these pupils' progress towards their targets, and the subsequent identification of any gaps in their knowledge and skills. The school should ensure that the assessment of pupils' achievements in relation to their EHC plan targets enable these pupils to receive sharply focused support so that they achieve as highly as possible.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144321
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10254781
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	97
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Eileen Hartley
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Sean Kelly
<b>Principal</b>	Andrew Morgan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woodlands.raleightrust.org">www.woodlands.raleightrust.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Woodlands Academy is a special school for pupils with a range of additional needs, predominantly autism. The school is part of the Raleigh Education Trust.
- All pupils who attend the school are supported by an EHC plan.
- At the time of the inspection, pupils on roll at the school ranged from Year 2 to Year 11.
- 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 uses two unregistered alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with the representatives of the multi-academy trust and the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, mathematics and life skills. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about 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 also discussed the curriculum, reviewed samples of pupils' books and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

### **Inspection team**

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen McMullan

Ofsted Inspector

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