

Inspection of Woodlands Academy

Partney Road, Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 5EJ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 April 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Laura Turner. This school is part of Community Inclusive Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Peter Bell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Hopkins.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Woodlands Academy pupils learn the 'Woodlands Way'. Pupils learn to make their time in school worthwhile. They learn to be ambitious and to build on their achievements. The school is well-resourced. Facilities are bright and engaging. The building is designed to meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. This school is typically calm and orderly. Caring staff expertly support pupils if they need help to manage their behaviour or emotions.

Leaders have significantly improved the culture of learning in the school. They ensure that staff have high aspirations for pupils. Pupils experience a broad curriculum that matches the ambition of the national curriculum. It is thoughtfully adapted to meet individual pupils' needs. The curriculum is being embedded. Reading is at its core. Pupils engage with learning well. They learn a curriculum that prepares them with qualifications for life beyond school. Pupils receive effective support for their next steps in education or employment.

Pupils learn how to develop positive relationships with others. They develop strong relationships with staff. Staff listen to their worries or concerns. Pupils know that staff will support them with learning. This ensures that pupils are happy, feel safe and enjoy coming to this school.

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

Pupils learn a well sequenced curriculum that follows the national curriculum. It is carefully organised into stages. These are designed to meet the differing needs of pupils. Staff typically explain new concepts and use questioning effectively. However, there are times when teachers do not confidently present information and check understanding well.

Reading is an important part of the curriculum. All pupils read in dedicated sessions during the school day. Phonics has been relaunched for younger pupils. They receive effective personalised support. However, phonics support for older pupils who are late to develop their reading skills is not fully embedded. Some teachers of older pupils have not been trained to teach early reading. To further support reading, the school has correctly identified the need to provide parents and carers with information about ways that they can support their child's reading at home.

Pupils are mostly settled in lessons. Staff and pupils relationships are positive. Staff intervene swiftly and supportively if pupils lose focus. This ensures pupils' behaviour is well managed in and outside of lessons. The school has established clear behaviour routines and expectations of all pupils. Pupils enjoy being recognised for their positive attitudes and behaviour. They are proud to attend this school. Leaders work creatively to promote regular attendance. They have invested in additional staff to support pupils' regular attendance. However, despite many pupils being transported into school, some pupils do not attend school well.

The school's personal development offer has a clear focus on preparing pupils for 'life beyond Woodlands'. Pupils have confidence in the school to support them in their post-16 routes. They develop knowledge of the protected characteristics and fundamental British values through 'Monday media' lessons. They learn about topical news stories through the use of an online news resource. Pupils debate and develop an understanding of different cultures through focussed tutor periods and assemblies. The school supports pupils' next steps to adulthood and employment well. Pupils have regular opportunities to experience a range of external providers to support them with decisions about apprenticeships and technical qualifications.

Staff trust the school's leaders to support them in their roles. They value how leaders support their professional development. Staff receive weekly coaching conversations to develop their teaching and leadership practice. Staff morale is high. Trustees and governors are kept informed of the school's improvements through frequent visits and monitoring. The CEO ensures that the school is well supported. The school remains firmly in the trust's sights. It has invested in the school environment and curriculum. This ensures that the school is back on track.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not confidently present information and check understanding as well as they should. This means that there is variability in curriculum delivery in some subject areas. The school should ensure all teaching is of a consistently high quality across the curriculum.
- Some staff have not been trained to support pupils' early reading skills. This means that some pupils may not develop their reading skills as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that staff are upskilled to deliver the school's phonics programme confidently. The school should ensure that parents and carers have the information they need to help support their child's reading at home.
- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly. This includes some pupils that receive transport to school. They miss important learning which negatively impacts their academic progress and personal development. The school should continue to work with pupils and their families to overcome any barriers to regular attendance.

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	142510
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10298508
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Hopkins
CEO of trust	Peter Bell
Headteacher	Laura Turner
Website	www.woodlands-cit.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Woodlands Academy is a special school for pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. It is one of 13 schools in Community Inclusive Trust.
- All pupils have SEND. Most pupils have a primary need of social, emotional and mental health.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative education provider.
- The school measures itself against the Gatsby benchmarks to ensure pupils receive high-quality careers advice.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school had 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 headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met the CEO of Community Inclusive Trust. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and English, mathematics, and personal, social and health education. 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.
- 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.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Harrington

His Majesty's Inspector

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