

Inspection of a good school: Woodcroft Academy

Wallbridge Drive, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8JG

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2024

Outcome

Woodcroft Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Carly Wright. This school is part of the St Bart's Academy 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), Lisa Sarikaya, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Johnny Anderson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending Woodcroft Academy. They enjoy the school's balanced and well-planned curriculum. Leaders ensure that parents and carers are fully involved in their children's learning, for example in helping them learn to read. Parents appreciate the school's good communication with home.

Leaders have high expectations for what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Pupils get off to a good start in the early years. Learning moves smoothly from one key stage to the next. Across the school, pupils learn well. They often use information technology to good effect.

Adults forge strong relationships with pupils. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and corridors. Pupils are keen to learn and behave very well in lessons. They are polite, perceptive and articulate. At social times, pupils play happily together. They know there is always an adult to turn to who can resolve any issues. This helps all pupils to feel safe. Pupils' attendance is good.

Pupils have good opportunities to help others, for example reading with younger children. They enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities, and many recently took part in the Young Voices singing festival in Manchester.

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

Leaders ensure that learning to read is a top priority. From the early years onwards, pupils follow a structured phonics programme. This programme ensures that pupils learn about letters and their sounds in a logical order. Staff use the programme's resources in a

consistent way. They check regularly on how pupils are learning. Staff work closely with parents, and pupils read frequently to an adult. The school provides effective support for any pupils at risk of falling behind. Books are well matched to pupils' knowledge of phonics. Pupils quickly become fluent and enthusiastic readers. Across the school and in the range of subjects, pupils enjoy a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Teachers pay due attention to different reading skills.

Pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum. The school has planned an ambitious curriculum very carefully that precisely identifies the knowledge for pupils to learn. In general, learning builds on what pupils already know. Day-to-day activities in lessons ensure that the school's longer-term learning aims are met. In some subjects the school has recently adopted new schemes. Because of this switch, in these subjects older pupils sometimes do not have all the prior knowledge they need. Teachers make effective links between different subjects, such as geography and mathematics.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They make sure that pupils understand and use the correct vocabulary. Teachers use discussion well to tease out ideas and deepen pupils' understanding. For example, Year 1 geographers were able to see how the distinction between physical and man-made features of the landscape may not be a simple one. The school uses information technology to enhance pupils' learning significantly. Tablets help pupils to visualise new ideas, look back on what they have done before and respond to feedback. Frequent opportunities to recall their knowledge help pupils to remember their learning in the longer term.

Assessment is a strength of the school. Teachers check on what pupils are learning, for example through questioning, and adjust their teaching when necessary. Standard symbols enable pupils to identify how they can 'fix' their work.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Staff draw on guidance to ensure that pupils' needs are met. As a result, pupils with SEND are able to make good progress through the full curriculum.

Pupils' keenness to learn makes classrooms lively places. They discuss ideas enthusiastically when invited to do so. Pupils wanted to tell the inspector about French adjectives and how metric units of length worked in mathematics. Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to the rewards on offer, and this helps them to behave well in lessons and at social times. Disruption to learning is rare.

Pupils follow a planned programme of personal development that teaches them how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They also learn about different traditions and cultures, for example through celebrating religious festivals in the early years.

There is a clear commitment at all levels in the school to evaluate current practice and to improve it further. Adults work well together to meet the needs of pupils. However, the school has not ensured that all support staff are able to provide the best possible assistance to learners. Staff believe that leaders are considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In foundation subjects where the school has recently adopted a new curriculum, pupils have sometimes not had the opportunity to learn in earlier years the topics that the scheme expects. In these circumstances, pupils cannot build on their prior learning as effectively as they might. The school should ensure that in continuing to implement the new curriculum, current learning builds securely on what pupils already know and can do.
- The school has not provided some support staff with all the training and guidance they require. As a result, they are sometimes unable to provide the highest quality of support for pupils. The school should make sure that all teachers are aware of the most effective ways in which support staff can be deployed, and their responsibility to guide and monitor their work to ensure all adults provide pupils with the most effective support.

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, Woodcroft First School, to be good in March 2019.

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	147421
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294672
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Johnny Anderson
Principal	Carly Wright
Website	www.woodcroftacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Woodcroft Academy converted to become an academy in September 2019. When its predecessor school, Woodcroft First School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Some children in the Nursery class attend part-time.
- A before-school and an after-school club are run on the school site by another provider.
- 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.
- The inspector discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the principal, with the special educational needs coordinator and with curriculum leaders.

- The chair and three other members of the local governing committee met with the inspector. The inspector also met with the CEO in person, and the chair of trustees and two further trustees remotely.
- The inspector spoke with pupils at social times and with groups of pupils more formally.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector reviewed a range of documents, including evaluations and improvement plans. He also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector met with parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. He also considered responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. He also spoke to curriculum leaders about some other subjects.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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