

# Inspection of The Woodlands Academy

Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 6QN

---

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Michelle Hockham. This school is part of Horizons Specialist 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), Elizabeth Horne, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Walker.

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

The Woodlands Academy aims for children to develop into confident, happy and positive young people. The school has developed curriculum pathways to meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is detailed. Parts of the curriculum match the ambitions of the national curriculum. However, it is not clear consistently how curriculum pathways work together as pupils progress through the school.

The pupils who attend the school have a diverse range of SEND. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Leaders ensure all pupils are fully included in school life. Some pupils join the school with mixed experiences of, and attitudes towards, education. Some pupils have historic poor attendance. A minority are supported to attend the school using part-time timetables. Staff build strong relationships with pupils and ensure they are supported well.

Most pupils feel safe in school. Staff reassure pupils when they are worried. Adults provide sensitive support when pupils need help to manage their emotions. This ensures the school is calm. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe while working and playing online and in the community. Staff are alert to any safeguarding concerns that pupils face.

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

Reading and communication are important aspects of the school's work. Phonics is well embedded in the school. Staff are well trained. They support pupils skilfully to develop their phonics knowledge. Some pupils learn to communicate effectively using assistive technology and picture symbols. Other pupils strengthen their communication skills by learning Makaton. This ensures pupils access curriculum pathways equally well.

Leaders have developed a detailed curriculum across all subject areas. It is further organised into curriculum pathways that are designed to meet pupils' SEND and individual needs. This includes pupils' EHC plan targets. It is not consistently clear how curriculum pathways work together as pupils progress through the school. This makes teaching difficult. As a result, some teaching does not consistently match the strongest teaching across all pathways.

Pupils move around the school calmly. Staff set clear expectations. They model positive behaviours well through a patient and friendly approach. This ensures pupils feel secure. Most pupils respond appropriately. Some pupils are frequently absent. The school has established systems and procedures to promote regular attendance. However, the school's approaches to reduce absence need further strengthening. Some pupils are supported to attend school with part-time timetables. These are used for short periods of time for medical reasons and to build pupils' resilience. However, these pupils miss important learning.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school's work. Pupils are well prepared for life outside of school. They learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pupils develop their talents and interests. They sing and learn to play musical instruments. Some develop artistic skills and learn to dance. Pupils play netball at the England team facilities in Nottingham. All activities are clearly mapped to ensure accessibility. Pupils contribute to the community productively. They run a market stall and support a foodbank. Some pupils achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's award. Pupils' next steps to post-16 education, employment or training are prioritised. Careers guidance is carefully planned. Pupils take part in work experience. This includes work with national and local employers.

Governors are passionate about the school. They have successfully overseen the development of the school from a local authority school to standalone academy and more recently, to joining a specialist academy trust. Governance practices have strengthened since joining the multi-academy trust. They believe a team is better than the individual. Trustees know the school well. They are kept up to date with the school's progress through detailed challenge reports, scrutiny visits and standards committee meetings. They have correctly identified what needs to improve further in the school. Staff, including early career teachers, speak highly of leaders' support for their well-being and workload. They say leaders are responsive and accessible. As a result, staff morale is positive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a positive culture of safeguarding. This extends to pupils who attend alternative education providers. Since the last inspection, leaders have further developed their systems to record safeguarding actions. Safeguarding logs are typically precise and timely. However, a minority are less detailed and not recorded promptly.

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

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

- It is not consistently clear how curriculum pathways work together as pupils progress through the school. This makes teaching difficult. As a result, some teaching does not match the strongest across all pathways. The school should ensure curriculum pathways are clearer and better help teachers deliver learning.
- Some pupils are frequently absent. This includes pupils on part-time timetables. This limits their learning and negatively impacts on their academic progress. The school should work with parents, carers and external partners to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.
- Some pupils are supported to attend school through part-time timetables. These pupils miss important learning which negatively impacts on their academic

progress. The school should carefully work to reduce the number of pupils who are placed on part-time timetables.

- Staff record their safeguarding actions in an electronic information management system. A minority of actions and follow-up activities are not detailed and not recorded promptly. This makes it difficult to track the support that staff provide to pupils and their families. The school should ensure that all records clearly detail the actions and follow-up activities that staff take to safeguard pupils.

## 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>	139482
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10297387
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	135
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Walker
<b>Principal</b>	Michelle Hockham
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://woodlands.horizonstrust.org.uk/">https://woodlands.horizonstrust.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date(s) of previous inspection</b>	29 and 30 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Woodlands Academy is a special school for pupils aged between two and 16 years. No children in the early years foundation stage currently attend the school.
- The school makes provision for pupils with a range of complex SEND. These include autism; social, emotional and mental health; and moderate learning difficulty. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- There are 12 pupils who attend the school with part-time timetables. These are in agreement with pupils' parents and carers. Some are in agreement with external services.
- The school joined Horizons Specialist Academy Trust in May 2023.
- 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first 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 principal, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met the CEO and deputy CEO of Horizons Specialist Academy Trust and members of the board of trustees. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone to the unregistered alternative education provider used the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and communication, 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

Angela Spencer-Brooke

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024