

# The Woodlands Academy

Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO12 6QN

**Inspection dates** 11–12 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Good		2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	Good		2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear vision, which is taking the academy in the direction of very effective provision for meeting the wide and complex needs of pupils.
- Leaders, managers and governors drive the improvement of teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour effectively.
- The curriculum is planned precisely to meet pupils' needs. The time given to teaching the behaviours pupils need to be effective learners is a strength.
- Provision for children in early years is well led and managed. The academy's values and aims regarding deep commitment to meeting children's needs are clearly implicit in teaching and learning.
- Teaching over time is good. Teachers make a thorough assessment of each pupil and plan effectively to meet their needs and set work and activities that are usually closely matched to the point pupils' have reached in their learning. There is a great deal of consistency across the academy in the management of pupils and in directing their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and for most it improves considerably over time. As a result they behave well independently.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils' health and safety and effective measures to safeguard them lie at the heart of the academy's work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes pupils' work is either too easy or too difficult for them and they lose interest in their learning as a result.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough to enable pupils to reinforce their writing skills and thus improve the overall quality of their writing.
- The academy must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools, which have not been met.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the academy and were joined by the headteacher in some of their observations.
- The social care inspector visited the school’s residential accommodation and spoke to the pupils living there. Discussions were held with residential staff and a wide range of documents were examined including care records, policies and procedures.
- Policies and procedures for child protection and the safeguarding pupils were scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with senior, middle leaders and teachers.
- Discussions took place with representatives of the governing body.
- The reading skills of a small sample of primary pupils were checked.
- An inspector met with a group of pupils to hear their views of the academy and their experiences of learning.
- The inspectors looked at a range of the academy’s documents including information on pupils’ progress, the academy’s development plan, curriculum policies and the academy’s own view of how well it is doing.
- The inspectors took account of the 13 responses made by parents to Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View). The views of staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were also considered.

## Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Bailey

Additional Inspector

Steve Pearson

Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Woodlands Academy converted to become an academy school in April 2013. When its predecessor school, Woodlands School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- Woodlands Academy is a residential special school providing education for pupils with moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- Many of these pupils have an autism spectrum condition and other additional needs such as communication difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, sensory impairments and medical conditions.
- All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The large majority of pupils are in Key Stage 3 and 4. There are very few children in early years and small numbers in Key Stages 1 and 2. Early years provision is full time.
- Pupils are admitted to the school at any point in their education and at different times during the school year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Residential accommodation is provided for a maximum of 23 pupils overall in term time on Monday to Thursday. The maximum number of residential pupils who may reside at the academy at any one time is 10. Small groups of pupils who have similar needs or interests stay for one night only during the week. The residential provision was inspected at the same time as the academy.

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

- Raise the proportions of good or better teaching by ensuring the work set for pupils is always closely matched to the point they have reached in their learning.
- Increase pupils' progress in writing by:
  - ensuring all teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for pupils to improve their writing skills and the quality of their written work in line with the academy's literacy policy
  - ensuring leaders take effective steps to check that the teaching of writing is challenging and leads to improved progress throughout the academy.
- The academy must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:
  - monitoring done by the external visitor should include rigorous checks on the academy's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments and, where they exist, individual care plans for children (NMS 20.2).
- Leaders must carry out a rigorous review and record in writing, once each year, an internal assessment of its compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools (NMS 20.4).

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have consummate knowledge and expertise in the field of severe disabilities and special educational needs, which they use effectively to make provision that tackles pupils' barriers to learning.
- Ensuring pupils feel safe and secure is particularly important to meeting their needs and the arrangements for safeguarding them are robust and meet requirements. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and any risk of discrimination is eliminated.
- Leaders maintain good relationships with the community, the local authority, schools, parents and the many agencies who give support to pupils and their families.
- The academy's capacity for improvement is good. Governors and senior leaders fully appreciate the importance of fresh ideas and continuous development in seeking the most effective ways of supporting pupils and helping them learn and make progress.
- The culture of innovative thinking underpins the well-spent pupil premium. The extra money has enabled additional staff support, working with families in particular, but also by increasing the range of interventions, which improve pupils' behaviour, their personal, social and emotional development and readiness for learning.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have ensured that all of the staff are equipped with the skills they need to meet pupils' needs and to keep them safe. The professional development of staff with training and a continuous review of their work and its outcomes are at the heart of the academy's work. It is a key factor in driving improvement in teaching and the outcomes for pupils.
- The staff work together in highly cohesive ways and, inspired by the academy's aims, commit to pursuing its high expectations.
- Wider leadership roles are being developed following a review of the way the academy is managed. Middle leaders benefit from having clear expectations and go about their responsibilities with enthusiasm and commitment. Their role in making rigorous checks, such as on teaching or pupils' progress, is at an early stage.
- Senior leaders have the lion's share of checking teaching and pupils' progress and these are kept under regular review. There is an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and an increasingly detailed picture of the progress of different groups of pupils. The analysis of progress data is relatively new. It is gaining in rigour but is currently limited in the extent of data over time. Rigorous checking of pupils' work is not consistent. As a result leaders have not assured themselves that pupils' writing meets the high expectations set out in the academy's literacy policy.
- The curriculum is a good match to pupils' needs and capabilities. It offers them a good variety of activities linked to their interests and talents, such as drama, art and music.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Key Stage 4 pupils have good careers advice and are prepared well for the next stage of their education. The good progress made in personal development, behaviour, interaction and communication is relevant to pupils being prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Sports and physical activities are strong features of the curriculum. The annual sports week, physical education and daily opportunities for exercise are well established. The physical education and sports premium has helped broaden choice, effectively giving more pupils new experiences such as sailing, kayaking and rock-climbing. It enables them to take part in more competitive sports away from the academy such as the North Yorkshire Special Schools Cricket Competition.
- The governance of the school:
  - Governors are effective and closely involved with the work of the academy, its leadership and improvement. They are committed to furthering their knowledge and skills of governance and undertaking a wide range of training. This has given them the strength to question leaders and they are rightly satisfied that the academy is well led and managed.
  - Governors are well informed and keep up to date with developments through regular meetings, thorough scrutiny of the headteacher's and other reports and frequent visits to the academy. Governors are shown data on pupils' progress that is broken down to show how different groups are performing, and which prompts questions.
  - Close attention is given by governors to reports on the quality of teaching and its improvement and they pursue the actions leaders take to eliminate any shortcomings. The good knowledge they have of teaching means they scrutinise the outcomes from teachers' performance management reviews and are able to satisfy themselves that improvements in teachers' pay and promotions are well founded.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The robust behaviour policy is consistently applied across the school and leads to the promotion of good behaviour. Pupils' behaviour plans set out in considerable detail an understanding of behaviour needs, the strategies for interacting with and the management of each pupil. The knowledge of pupils provided by their parents is a key aspect of planning.
- The staff are well trained; they manage behaviour effectively and make a significant contribution to its improvement. For many pupils it takes time and the perseverance of staff before they understand what is expected. High expectations challenge pupils to develop a greater degree of control over their feelings and behaviour. However, some pupils continue to need clear and consistent management in order to benefit from school.
- Symbol communication and clear and consistent routines ensure pupils settle, interact and are ready to learn. Some pupils respond very quickly and achieve a rapid transformation in their behaviour and attitude to learning.
- Sooner or later all pupils settle and take part in lessons. Relationships with staff are very positive and the trust and security that goes with this counts enormously towards pupils' good cooperation and enjoyment of their work and activities. Occasionally, in lessons, some pupils lose interest and disengage because their work is not challenging enough, but their behaviour does not deteriorate.
- Outside the classroom at playtimes and when eating lunch, pupils are well behaved, friendly and polite. Their view of school is very positive: in their words, 'It is a brilliant place.' They like and get on well with the staff and respect the way in which they are managed by them. The rewards for good behaviour are valued and seen as a good incentive.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The academy buildings and grounds have been carefully checked ensuring they are free from risks and are secure. Pupils' personal care and health needs are thoroughly understood and good support by staff and specialists is provided.
- All staff are well trained to protect pupils and to manage behaviour to avoid risks to pupils themselves and others. The very good relationships pupils have with staff and their good behaviour ensure they feel comfortable, safe and secure.
- Pupils feel safe and are happy with their experiences in the academy. They get on well together and there are no signs of bullying from observations and scrutiny of records. Pupils spoken to did not raise concerns about being bullied or seeing others being bullied. They know it is right to treat each other with respect and they do so.
- Pupils learn awareness of risks and how to stay safe on the street and to avoid the dangers of using the internet. Not all pupils are highly aware of risks and continue to need the close supervision of staff and their parents.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teachers and their assistants know pupils extremely well and the sharp focus they achieve in meeting needs ensures excellent relationships are developed. Getting on well with staff and developing trust leads to pupils building confidence and a positive attitude to learning. The high quality of planning around the care and support for pupils underpins pupils' good learning and progress over time.
- Staff are expert in promoting learning and progress and keep their skills sharp with training and developing effective teaching in response to their understanding of what works best for particular pupils. Close supervision and a high degree of attention for each pupil encourage their interest in learning and make sure they gain in essential knowledge and skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very confident in managing the challenges of engaging pupils in learning. Teaching is made lively and enjoyable. One such physical education lesson was full of energy and pace stretching pupils' physical skills and stamina. The quick-fire instructions for stopping and starting runs challenged pupils' listening skills and responses to instructions.
- Pupils have regular practise at reading and are taught letters and the sounds they make, which helps them to recognise words. When reading with an adult good questioning helps pupils to talk about and understand what they have read. While there are opportunities throughout the academy and in different

subjects for pupils to write, the emphasis in teaching for pupils to improve their writing is limited and is often only a function of recording work.

- Teaching develops pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills effectively and they are challenged well in applying their mathematics to solving problems such as telling the time and counting coins.
- Very occasionally, the work planned for pupils is either too easy or too difficult for some and enough has not been done to ensure all pupils are always appropriately challenged. When this happens pupils become less enthused about learning and making progress.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- The achievement of the very large majority of pupils is good and by the end of Key Stage 4 they are well prepared for the next stage of education.
- Leaders have ensured good teaching, an effective curriculum and a wide range of sharply focused support for pupils which tackle barriers to learning.
- From their different starting points, good proportions of primary and secondary pupils make expected progress and more-than-expected progress in literacy, numeracy and in personal and social development.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics is similar to other pupils in the academy. There is no significant gap in the performance of these two groups. Too few disadvantaged pupils take tests or examinations at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4 to enable meaningful comparisons to be made between their performance and that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to communicate by the most appropriate means. From their starting points, most learn the meaning of signs and symbols, providing them with the capacity to make choices, to know and follow routines and start to meet teachers' expectations. Speaking and listening, and the use of symbols and electronic communication aids develop rapidly over time and impact strongly on thinking and understanding.
- When reading, while word skills are developing, pupils also talk about stories and information in books, extending their knowledge and understanding and also their vocabulary.
- Writing skills develop from the earliest stage with the youngest pupils learning to hold a pen and control their mark-making to form letters. Following lots of practise pupils write independently, but once they have progressed to a level where they can put down their thoughts on paper, the quality of writing does not always improve significantly. However, in Key Stage 4, the more able pupils write eloquent poems which demonstrate a good challenge and their good command of language.
- As soon as they start school, pupils learn numbers, writing them down and counting, eventually multiplying and dividing sums, reading the time, adding up sums of money and solving problems. Some pupils add up a mix of coins accurately, demonstrating very clearly some well consolidated number skills. Pupils also learn to recognise and name shapes and colours from an early stage.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Early years provision is well led and managed. The quality of teaching is checked regularly by senior leaders and they carefully scrutinise children's progress.
- Very few children start school at the early years stage. When they do, they join a class of Years 1 and 2 pupils where, to a large extent, work and activities are appropriate to the requirements of the early years areas of learning.
- Early assessment of children's needs in consultation with parents and on-going assessment in the classroom are thorough.
- Children make good progress from very low starting points. Their interest is effectively engaged with a good range of sensory experiences in activities using water, sand, song and images. The enjoyment in work and play contributes well to encouraging communication and to the development of knowledge and skills.
- Teachers' high expectations and the excellent relationships adults develop with children lead to good amounts of interaction and participation. Communication skills are expertly taught using signing, symbols and the sounds letters make.
- Behaviour is good. Children make good progress in their social skills such as taking turns and showing respect for each other. The high level of attention given by adults to each child and close supervision ensure children stay and feel safe.

<b>Outcomes for residential pupils</b>	<b>are good</b>
<b>Quality of residential provision and care</b>	<b>is good</b>
<b>Residential pupils' safety</b>	<b>is good</b>
<b>Leadership and management of the residential provision</b>	<b>are adequate</b>

- The residential provision has clearly stated aims of helping residential pupils to feel safe, gain independence and develop social skills. Leaders ensure these objectives are being met effectively.
- The head of care seeks and takes account of the views of residential pupils and their parents in deciding on improvements to the hostel. Parents speak very highly of the quality of written and verbal communication they receive from the residential staff and head of care.
- All of the required policies and procedures are in place although their impact on provision is not always checked rigorously through the required external and internal reviews. This includes detailing more fully issues such as bullying, behaviour in the outside community and vulnerability to deliberate or accidental self-harm. As a result, two of the required minimum standards are not met in full. It reduces, for example, the capacity for improving risk assessments, which are not fully descriptive in terms of individual hazards.
- The outcomes for residential pupils are good. They have a significant say in how the hostel is run and they enjoy a wide range of activities offered.
- Residential pupils make good progress in developing independence skills, and significant improvements in their physical and emotional health. The strong friendships between pupils in the hostel build confidence and improve social skills. One pupil said, 'I swear a lot less now because the staff have helped me and I am calmer.' Parents comment very positively about how their child has gained social skills and become more independent
- Residential pupils' behaviour is good and only on very rare occasions would staff need to intervene to manage pupils' behaviour. The staff are effective in promoting positive behaviour through praise and rewards. Staffing levels in the hostel are good and residential pupils experience a high degree of consistency in what is expected from them.
- Residential pupils say they feel safe and there is no bullying. Health and safety standards in the hostel are good. Pupils enjoy their experience of stays in the hostel and stay safe because of good levels of supervision. Child protection policies and procedures are up to date and the staff are proactive in safeguarding pupils' safety. All residential staff are trained in the administration of medication, and the recording of medication provides for full accountability.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139482
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC007944
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	449936

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	77
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	20
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bernie Weekes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annette Fearn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
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