

# Inspection of a good school: Woodlands School

Woodlands Approach, Basildon, Essex SS16 5BA

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

## Outcome

Woodlands School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is David Wright. This school is part of Compass Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ahson Mohammed, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Miller.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Woodlands. They feel safe in school and have trusted adults with whom they can raise concerns. They appreciate how the school acts on their suggestions to make them feel safer, for example by increasing adult supervision of pupils at break- and lunchtimes.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. These expectations have increased over recent years. Pupils are rising to meet them. As a result, the behaviour in lessons and around the school site is good.

Pupils overwhelmingly value the range of opportunities available to them at school. This includes a broad selection of subjects they can study and opportunities outside the curriculum to pursue their talents or new interests. There is a large range of clubs and activities that are offered at different times during the school day.

Pupil leadership opportunities are numerous and popular. These include high-level leadership positions, such as those of prefect or member of the junior leadership team, and other positions across the school. Pupils recognise that these opportunities improve the school and give them valuable experience for later life.

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

Over recent years, the school has redesigned its curriculum. It now offers a broad and ambitious curriculum to all pupils. In Year 9, pupils begin to study subjects they have chosen. The subjects they can choose are wide and varied. There is a strong academic core alongside more practical choices, such as construction, and hair and beauty. The

school has made reading a priority. Pupils have many opportunities to read in school. Those who struggle to read are identified early and given the help they need to read well.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has robust processes for identifying and reviewing the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers receive the information and training they need to meet pupils' needs and make adaptations to their teaching. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The school has thought carefully about the knowledge it wants pupils to learn. This is specified in detail and is well sequenced in the curriculum, so that pupils can build up their knowledge in small steps. In a very small number of subjects, this is not as developed. Work is already under way to bring these areas up to the high standard of others.

The school gives teachers the time and training they need to build and maintain their subject expertise. This helps them to teach the curriculum well. Teachers provide clear and well-thought-out explanations. They use effective questioning to check how well pupils are learning subject content. Deliberate recall of prior knowledge at the start of lessons and through homework is helping to secure pupils' knowledge over time. Occasionally, teachers do not always plan activities that help pupils add to what they already know. This sometimes prevents pupils from making sense of new concepts or building on their prior knowledge.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Clear routines for behaviour have been established. These are helping pupils to behave well in lessons and maximise learning time. Older pupils say that expectations are much higher and more consistent than they have been in past years. A small number of pupils do not attend as often as they could. The school challenges and helps these pupils to attend more regularly.

The school caters well for pupils' personal development. Leaders across many areas of the school have worked together to ensure that the school's aspirations, resilience, opportunities and excellence (AROE) curriculum includes the relationships and sex education, health education and careers education that pupils need. This has been thoughtfully sequenced to build up pupils' knowledge in an age-appropriate way. Pupils enjoy their learning in AROE lessons. One pupil commented, 'It is giving us the skills we need for our life now and in the future.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a small number of curriculum areas, teachers sometimes plan activities that do not help to consolidate what pupils have learned or build on what they already know. This

prevents pupils from building on their prior knowledge and understanding new concepts. The school should ensure that all teachers plan appropriate activities that are well matched to what pupils know and can do.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

## 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>	141214
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10295069
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,497
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ian Miller
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Ahson Mohammed
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Wright
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woodlandsschool.org">www.woodlandsschool.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Compass Education Trust. It was part of Takely Education Trust until August 2023.
- The school makes use of three alternative providers, two of which are registered.
- 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

- 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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector also met with teachers at the early stages of their career to discuss the support they receive.
- The lead inspector met with trustees and members of the local governing body. This included the chair of the local governing body and the chair of the board of trustees. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer of Compass Education Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, history, physical education and modern foreign languages. 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.
- The lead inspector also looked at curriculum plans from other subject areas.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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**

Marc White, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cathy Barr

Ofsted Inspector

Suzanne Thrower

Ofsted Inspector

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