

# Inspection of Woodbridge Road Academy

50 Russet Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2EB

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inspection dates:         | 3 and 4 June 2025                                                  |
| The quality of education  | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Outstanding</b>                                                 |
| Personal development      | <b>Outstanding</b>                                                 |
| Leadership and management | <b>Outstanding</b>                                                 |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

The principal of this school is Naomi Shenton. This school is part of the Paradigm Trust which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Bill Holledge, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Willis.

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

Many pupils join this school having previously had limited and sometimes difficult experiences of education. Due to the relentlessly positive and patient work of staff, and the high expectations of them, pupils make huge strides in their resilience and self-confidence. They increasingly feel happy at school. Pupils learn how to communicate their wants and needs and how to regulate their emotions. Pupils know that adults will support them exceptionally well if they need help. As a result, pupils substantially improve their attitudes to learning and their attendance during their time at the school.

Teachers are aware of where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and experiences. They plan and ably teach the ambitious curriculum to fill these gaps. Consequently, pupils achieve well from their starting points as they engage with learning.

The school offers a raft of carefully planned and high-quality opportunities for pupils to develop their teamwork and explore the world around them. Pupils in year 9 and above do work experience and take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award. Pupils also take part in sporting competitions, climbing and sailing activities. They grow vegetables in the school's garden and learn about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils also learn about other faiths. For example, by visiting a Buddhist temple. Pupils understand the importance of consent and how to use the internet safely. Pupils feel safe in school.

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

The school aspires highly for all pupils. In addition to tailored support to develop their communication and interaction skills, pupils follow an ambitious, broad curriculum based on the national curriculum. This is well adapted to meet pupils' needs. Pupils get strong foundations in English and mathematics. In key stage 4, pupils choose from a wide range of GCSEs and other qualifications. The school goes out of its way to support pupils to pursue areas of interest, such as art and photography. Pupils meet a plethora of employers and further education providers. The school's highly comprehensive careers, information and guidance programme equips pupils to make informed choices about post-16 courses and employment.

The school carefully identifies the key knowledge that pupils need. Staff usually check gaps in pupils' knowledge rigorously. They design and adjust the curriculum effectively to close these gaps. Teachers consider how to break down new learning to meet the targets on pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. They recap and revisit previous learning so that pupils are helped to remember what they are taught. Staff use their strong subject knowledge to introduce new learning clearly and engagingly. As a result, pupils usually gain new knowledge securely. Sometimes, particularly where there have been recent changes to the curriculum, activity choices do not precisely meet the needs of pupils. When this happens, pupils do not acquire knowledge as securely as they should.

Pupils read an engaging and diverse range of texts daily in school. Those pupils who need additional help to read receive it. This helps them to become accurate and fluent readers

who can access the curriculum.

The school has high, clear expectations of how pupils should behave. Staff work tenaciously, and with considerable skill, to help pupils focus on their work. When pupils become dysregulated, staff skilfully and patiently help them to settle and feel calm again. Pupils make friends. They learn to play and share with each other, organising football and other games. Pupils support and encourage each other. They enjoy the rich opportunities that the school offers, such as a wide range of clubs. The school's exceptional work significantly improves pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons. Classrooms are purposeful, positive and calm.

Pupils have an important voice in the school. The active school council makes suggestions about how the school can be further improved. These suggestions, such as for the school to run a residential trip, are, whenever possible, acted upon. Pupils present to the local authority on how the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can be met. This helps them learn about democracy and how they can advocate for their own, and others' rights and needs.

Staff, at all levels, leave no stone unturned to improve the life chances of pupils. Trustees and leaders reflect on the school's provision and successfully ensure that it develops still further. Staff receive high- quality professional development so that they can ably carry out their roles. Staff greatly enjoy working at the school. They are fully supported with their well-being and workload. The school has established close links with parents and carers, such as through the academy council. Staff go above and beyond to support them and their children.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school has not yet ensured that all staff consistently make activity choices that precisely meet the needs of pupils. When this happens pupils do not acquire the knowledge that they should. The school should build on its work to develop teachers' subject pedagogical knowledge, so they make consistently appropriate choices of activity for 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>             | 149072                                                                           |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Suffolk                                                                          |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10378595                                                                         |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Special                                                                          |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy free school                                                              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 9 to 16                                                                          |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                            |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 76                                                                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees                                                                |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | David Willis                                                                     |
| <b>CEO of the trust</b>                    | Bill Holledge                                                                    |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Naomi Shenton                                                                    |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.woodbridgeroadacademy.org">www.woodbridgeroadacademy.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected under section 5 or 8 of the Education Act, 2005.        |

## Information about this school

- Woodbridge Road Academy admitted its first pupils in September 2022 into temporary accommodation. It moved to its current site in September 2023.
- The school is part of the Paradigm Trust.
- The school is a special school for pupils whose primary need is communication and interaction. Many pupils also have additional needs, most often autism spectrum disorder (ASD). All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school currently makes use of five registered alternative provisions for pupils.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school 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.
- The lead inspector spoke to the trust CEO, trustees and members of the school's academy council.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, creative arts, and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the responses and free-text comments received during the inspection to Ofsted Parent View. They took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

## **Inspection team**

Steve Woodley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Heather Hann

Ofsted Inspector

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