

Inspection of Woodlands Primary Academy

Broadbent Road, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL1 4HU

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The executive principal of this school is Louise Hayes. This school is part of the South Pennine Academies 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), Alison Black, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lisa Fathers.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this vibrant, welcoming school. Staff know them well and celebrate their individuality. The school fosters an inclusive environment that is aspirational for the achievement of all. Pupils feel happy and safe. They describe their school as a place where people are kind.

Following a period of change, the school has raised its expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils achieve increasingly well in some subjects. However, weaknesses in how well the curriculum is delivered mean that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils are friendly and courteous. From the beginning of the early years to Year 6, they are attentive in lessons. Disruption to pupils' learning and to school life is rare. If poor behaviour were to happen, pupils rightly trust adults to deal with it quickly.

Pupils spoke highly of the broad range of wider opportunities available. Clubs such as cross-country and football are popular. They help pupils learn new skills as well as feel well prepared for regular local tournaments. Pupils learn about differences between themselves and others. They spoke warmly about the importance of respect for each other and everyone being welcome in their school.

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

This school is emerging from a significant period of instability. It has recently made several changes to strengthen the curriculum. The curriculum is engaging and ambitious for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has thought carefully about the important knowledge it wants pupils to learn at each stage.

Staff receive regular training, including from the trust. Staff typically have secure subject knowledge. However, in some subjects, staff lack the skills needed to explain things clearly and design activities that enable pupils to learn well. This means that for some pupils, new knowledge is not clearly understood. In addition, the school's approaches to helping pupils remember what they have learned are not used consistently. As a result, pupils occasionally do not develop a secure knowledge base on which they can build new learning.

Early reading and phonics are given high priority. In the early years, children enjoy sharing stories and singing rhymes. When they are ready, they quickly learn the sounds and letters they need to begin to read. If pupils struggle with reading, skilled staff provide effective support to help them catch up rapidly. By the time pupils leave Year 6, they are avid readers who talk articulately about books and authors they like.

The school has effective systems in place to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are skilled at adapting the curriculum to support pupils with SEND effectively. This ensures that pupils with SEND learn the curriculum well from their starting points.

From the very beginning of the early years, children learn how to interact with each other positively. As they get older, pupils have buoyant attitudes to learning and show resilience when tasks become more challenging. They are proud of their school. They understand the importance of attending school each day. Where needed, the school works in partnership with families to overcome any barriers to attending school. As a result, absence has significantly reduced.

The school has given extensive thought to the way it develops pupils' character. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that are woven carefully through the curriculum. For example, they have regular, engaging enrichment weeks focusing on various useful themes such as aspirations, sustainability and enterprise. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their business ventures and selling the products they design, cost and make. They have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values. Older pupils are excellent role models for younger pupils. Pupils carry out their roles of responsibility, for example as sports leaders, eco-councillors and reading ambassadors, with commitment and pride.

The recently appointed local academy board has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. The trust has provided high-quality support to the school during a recent period of instability. This has ensured that leaders and staff feel empowered to make positive changes and to re-establish expectations and culture. Staff feel valued and rightly say their workload and well-being are considered by leaders. Both the trust and the local academy board hold leaders to account diligently for the quality of education children receive.

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 minority of subjects, teachers do not consistently implement the school's curriculum as intended. This prevents some pupils from developing the depth of subject knowledge they need. The school should ensure staff are well trained to implement the curriculum across all subjects and year groups.
- In a few subjects, the school's approaches for pupils to revisit essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary are not as effective as they could be. On occasion, this prevents some pupils from having sufficiently secure foundations on which to build new learning. In these curriculum areas, the school should ensure that pupils are enabled to embed knowledge successfully into their long-term memory.

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	144025
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10383593
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	359
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lisa Fathers
CEO of the trust	Alison Black
Executive principal	Louise Hayes
Website	www.woodlandsprimaryacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Woodlands Primary Academy is part of the South Pennine Academies Trust.
- A new executive principal took up post in January 2025
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school manages an on-site breakfast and after-school club.

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). 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. The 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 met with the executive principal and other senior leaders and staff. She also met with members of the trust, including the chair of trustees and the local academy board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. 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.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspectors observed some pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Howard	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Stevens	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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025