

Inspection of Woodend Farm School

Woodend Farm, Hatfield Road, Witham, Essex CM8 1EH

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent standards? **Yes** school

What is it like to attend this school?

Woodend Farm School is a nurturing and caring place to learn. Many pupils arrive at the school following a disrupted education, with extended periods of nonattendance. Kind and supportive staff go to great lengths to build strong, trusting relationships with pupils and their families. This means pupils feel safe and happy. For many, this is the first time they have successfully engaged with learning.

Staff support pupils to manage their worries about change, new places and people. The personalised curriculum helps pupils to be emotionally ready to learn. Pupils learn to communicate with others positively. As a result, they look forward to coming to school and attend regularly. Pupils flourish at their happy, inclusive and welcoming school.

Staff have high expectations for pupils. All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum teaches pupils about the world around them. Pupils learn valuable life skills, such as personal care and hygiene and cooking, which prepare them well for their future. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when at home, such as who to call if there is a fire. As well as what to do if you get lost in unfamiliar places, such as shops.

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

Pupils join with gaps in their knowledge and learning. The school focuses on supporting pupils' social and emotional needs, so they settle into the school quickly. Once settled, pupils learn a broad curriculum. This includes a core offer of mathematics and English, with a specific focus on reading. The wider curriculum includes life skills, personal, social and emotional development, personal safety and animal care. In most areas, the school has ordered important knowledge into a logical sequence. Here, teachers break learning down into small steps, so pupils build on their knowledge well. In some subjects, the school has not identified exactly what pupils need to learn. This means staff are less clear on what to teach pupils. Here, teachers do not consistently match work that helps pupils to build on their knowledge over time. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well they could.

Staff know pupils well and understand their needs. They adapt curriculums to help pupils work towards the outcomes outlined in their education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Teachers focus on closing pupils' gaps in knowledge. This helps pupils to achieve well.

Staff regularly read stories to pupils. This helps pupils to begin to develop a love of reading. Pupils learn the sounds that letters make. They develop their understanding of how to decode and read simple sentences. Most pupils read well and at an appropriate level to their phonics knowledge during reading lessons. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to apply this knowledge of reading in other

areas of the curriculum. This means pupils do not become fluent as soon as they could.

The school has high expectations for all pupils to attend school regularly. Many pupils have never attended school full time, so pastoral support and focus on pupils' individual emotional needs are key to the pupils having positive attendance. The school monitors attendance closely. They provide support to pupils and families and make referrals where needed to ensure that attendance is a priority. As a result of the school's effort, pupils improve their attendance quickly.

Pupils are developing positive attitudes towards learning activities. Staff are highly skilled at adapting routines to meet pupils' needs. They support pupils to make positive choices when they find things tricky. This helps pupils to complete learning activities and secure the important knowledge they need for their next steps of learning.

Pupils benefit from a well-planned personal development curriculum. They have a range of trips, visits and visitors to help them practise their learning. For example, pupils visited a garden centre to consolidate their learning of plants. Pupil voice is valued in the school. The recently established school council is helping to make changes in the playground to develop pupils' interests.

The school leaders, including the proprietor, have a clear vision for the school. The school is in its infancy. The proprietor ensures that the school is compliant with the independent school standards, including the Equality Act 2010. They hold school leaders to account and provide challenge where needed. Leaders check how well pupils are learning. They make changes to the curriculum that impact positively on pupils. This is more developed in areas where knowledge is well sequenced. In areas where the school has not completed this work, monitoring of the curriculum is in its infancy. This means the school has not been able to evaluate the impact of the full curriculum. Staff feel well supported at the school. They know that leaders will support their workload and provide support if they need it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge of reading outside phonics lessons. This means they do not become fluent readers as soon as they could. The school should ensure that teachers provide routine opportunities for pupils to read outside of phonics lessons so they become fluent and confident readers sooner.
- In some subjects, where the curriculum is new, the school has not provided staff with sufficient clarity on the important knowledge pupils need to learn. This leads

to occasions where staff set work that does not enable pupils to secure what they need for future learning. The school should ensure that they clearly identify the knowledge pupils need across these subjects. They should then ensure that staff understand how to provide pupils with work that enables them to secure this knowledge.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	149597
DfE registration number	881/6094
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10321488
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Integrity Education Ltd
Chair	Robert Saggs
Headteacher	Nicola Overland
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Telephone number	01376 790 202
Website	woodendfarm.school
Email address	admin@woodendfarm.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The proprietor body is Integrity Education Ltd. The proprietor body is made up of individuals who have experience of managing alternative provisions. The proprietor body has delegated responsibilities to monitor the progress and performance of the school.

- The school was first registered on 21 April 2023. This is the first standard inspection of the school.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school provides education for pupils with SEND related to autism. Most/All pupils have an EHC plan. Some pupils also have specific learning difficulties, physical needs and/or social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school caters for up to 16 pupils aged six to eleven years of age. Pupils are referred by local authorities. Most pupils have experienced disruption to their education previously.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the head of school, assistant headteacher and chief executive officer. They also spoke with a range of staff throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body and members of the board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at the curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including animal care.

- The views of parents were gathered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Responses to the staff and pupil survey were also used alongside discussions with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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.
- Compliance with the independent school standards was checked throughout the inspection, including tours of the school site, discussions with leaders and a review of relevant documentation.
- Due to pupils needs, an adult was present when inspectors spoke with some pupils. This did not affect the evidence gathered.

Inspection team

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Daniel Short

His Majesty's Inspector

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