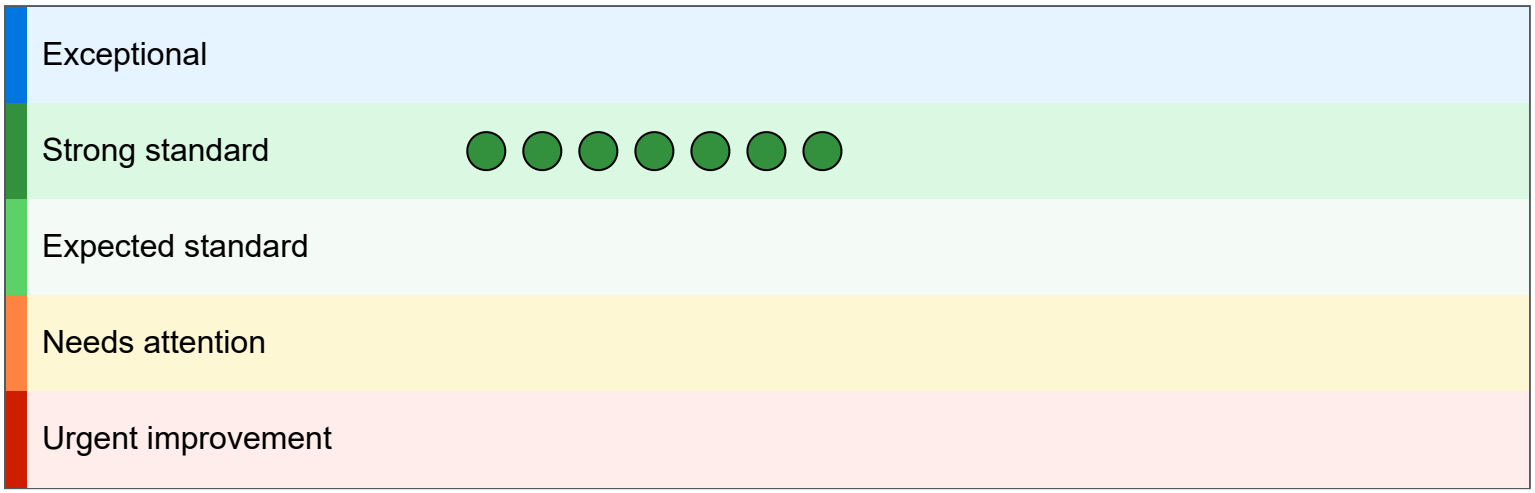
The Woodlands School

Address: Admiral Drive, Hazeley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK8 0PU

Unique reference number (URN): 110584

Inspection report: 6 October 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, progress well from their wide ranging starting points. They make positive progress through the curriculum. This includes building independence and developing pupils' ability to recognise and communicate their emotions, thoughts and needs in different ways. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply and practise what they have learned.

Leaders carefully monitor pupils' progress to identify what they know and can do, alongside where further learning is needed. They celebrate achievement and provide timely, targeted support where required. This enables pupils to keep up with the curriculum.

Older pupils access a growing range of qualifications and accreditations. Leaders ensure that these reflect pupils' individual needs and aspirations. This helps prepare pupils well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders prioritise attendance and consistently promote high expectations. They understand the challenges that pupils' complex needs can present. Leaders monitor attendance closely and respond quickly to emerging concerns. They work effectively with pupils, families and wider services to identify and reduce barriers to attendance. Leaders adapt their approach to reflect individual needs and circumstances. They make appropriate adjustments and draw on multi-agency support where needed. This sustained and personalised work is having a positive impact. There are notable improvements to attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with additional vulnerabilities.

Leaders promote a positive and purposeful culture. Pupils learn in calm and orderly surroundings. They behave well, respect others and value difference. Bullying is rare. Staff address concerns quickly and effectively. They manage daily routines skilfully, so pupils know what to expect and feel secure. Staff maintain high expectations and use detailed behaviour support plans to adapt their approach to individual needs. During breaktimes, staff use the school's facilities and resources well to meet pupils' personal, sensory, social and emotional needs. Pupils enjoy these positive experiences. They feel safe and valued. Warm and respectful relationships between staff and pupils underpin the school's positive culture. Leaders analyse a broad range of behaviour information. They identify what works well and use these insights to strengthen practice further.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have designed an aspirational curriculum that reflects pupils' diverse starting points. It remains ambitious for what each pupil can achieve. Provision ranges from developing the earliest communication skills to securing accreditations and qualifications. Close oversight of each pathway enables leaders to review and refine the curriculum continually as pupil cohorts change.

The curriculum is carefully structured to develop pupils' knowledge and skills progressively. Teachers quickly identify where pupils need further support in reading, writing and mathematics. They deliver the school's systematic phonics programme effectively and provide focused numeracy support. This helps pupils to secure important foundations to build from.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this effectively to strengthen pupils' understanding. They give pupils frequent opportunities to revisit important knowledge and skills. Pupils consequently make meaningful links with previous learning and deepen their understanding. This is particularly evident in the school's careers curriculum, which helps pupils to develop the skills they need for adulthood and life beyond school.

Leaders ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to achieve well. They continue to prioritise the refinement of inclusive teaching and adapt provision from the moment pupils join the school.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders place removing barriers at the heart of their work. They swiftly identify and meet pupils' needs, drawing on existing expertise and specialist advice. They work closely with the virtual school to support looked-after children. Leaders shape provision around pupils' individual needs. They provide staff with training tailored to the pupils they support. Staff use effective approaches to enable all pupils to access learning, making carefully considered adaptations where needed. As a result, provision is highly effective.

Leaders routinely evaluate the school's approach to inclusion, including the use of additional funding. They draw on reliable evidence and specialist advice. They adapt support promptly when pupils' needs change. Leaders engage parents and carers in different ways. These include regular communication, invitations to sports days and bespoke options evenings linked to careers. Leaders maintain high expectations and ensure that pupils access a broad and engaging education.

Leaders have established a deeply inclusive culture where pupils feel a strong sense of belonging and build positive relationships with others. Pupils make impressive progress, often experiencing success in education for the first time. Leaders consistently act in pupils' best interests.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this knowledge to set focused improvement priorities and strengthen provision. These priorities reflect the complex and diverse needs of pupils. Leaders target support carefully and keep pupils' best interests at the heart of their decisions. As a result, pupils achieve well and develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need for future success.

Leaders prioritise staff development and wellbeing. They provide high-quality training that reflects pupils' specific special educational needs and/or disabilities. They tailor professional learning to individual staff, including those at the start of their careers. This develops staff expertise and strengthens practice. Leaders give careful consideration to workload and

welfare. The school's wellbeing team plays an important part in supporting staff. Staff value the support they receive and speak positively about working at the school.

Leaders have established highly effective relationships with parents and carers, external agencies and other professionals. Parents speak highly about the school and the support their children receive. Leaders play an active role in wider local authority work and share effective practice with other schools.

Governors know the school well and understand their responsibilities. They use their experience and expertise to support and challenge leaders appropriately. Governors show considerable commitment to the school and embody its inclusive ethos. They maintain effective oversight of leaders' work, including the school's statutory responsibilities.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have developed a broad and carefully planned programme of personal development. They tailor the offer to pupils' individual needs and the school's context. Leaders regularly refine the programme to keep it relevant. The varied opportunities capture pupils' interests and encourage curiosity and enjoyment. They build pupils' confidence, independence, communication skills and emotional wellbeing. As a result, pupils develop the knowledge, skills and self-belief they need to engage positively with the wider world.

Leaders provide opportunities for all pupils to explore their future choices. Links with local colleges and employers broaden pupils' understanding of the world of work. Pupils gain practical experience through making and selling products. They also develop skills in hospitality and food preparation. These experiences build confidence, raise aspirations and prepare pupils well for their next steps.

Leaders have devised an extensive range of opportunities that help pupils develop their talents and interests. These include sport, art, music, trips and residential experiences. Leaders listen to pupils, parents and carers when shaping these opportunities. This helps to ensure that the offer remains relevant and enriches pupils' wider development.

Pupils take on meaningful leadership roles across the school. They understand their responsibilities and act as positive role models. These opportunities build pupils' confidence to express their views and advocate for change. Leaders listen carefully and act on their suggestions. For example, pupils' views have helped shape the school's extra-curricular offer and social spaces. This gives pupils a genuine voice in school life and helps them to understand how they can influence decisions.

Pupils acquire a broad range of knowledge and skills that prepare them well for their next steps. Throughout the school, pupils learn about families, relationships, equality, different cultures and world faiths. They also learn how to stay healthy and safe, including online.

Post-16 provision

Strong standard

Leaders shape the post-16 curriculum around students' individual needs, interests and aspirations. They plan programmes of study carefully and deliver them consistently well. Students work towards qualifications that reflect their individual pathways. They progress

well through the curriculum. Alongside their academic learning, students develop the knowledge, skills and independence they need for the future. Travel training, cookery and independent living in the on-site flats provide valuable opportunities to put these skills into practice.

Leaders place careers education and work experience at the heart of the sixth form offer. They listen carefully to students and use their views, interests and aspirations to shape opportunities. Students develop their understanding of the world of work through a wide range of practical experiences. They run a café, sell products through pop-up stalls and manage the school's sweet shop and launderette. External work placements extend these experiences further. Staff work closely with placement providers to ensure that they understand and meet students' individual needs. Leaders plan transitions carefully and prepare students well for what to expect. They adapt opportunities so that students with the most complex needs can participate meaningfully. Through these experiences, students develop confidence, independence and valuable skills for their next steps.

During their time in the provision, students make considerable progress and achieve a range of qualifications to help them transition to appropriate education and employment.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils benefit from a highly inclusive, ambitious and enriching school experience. They feel safe. Staff remain alert to their welfare from the moment they arrive at school. Carefully structured routines and personalised support help pupils to participate successfully and make meaningful choices. Behaviour is highly positive and staff swiftly address any rare concerns about bullying. Pupils attend very well and develop a strong sense of belonging.

Pupils enjoy a broad and purposeful curriculum that reflects their individual needs. From varied and often very low starting points, pupils achieve well and make positive progress. Staff consistently help pupils to develop their communication, independence and wider knowledge. As pupils progress through the school, they develop important skills for life. They learn to shop, cook, manage money and make healthy choices. Older pupils develop their independence further through work experience, travel training, gym visits and opportunities to use the school's on-site flats. Pupils learn about the world of work by running the school café and sweet shop, making and selling products, working alongside site staff and undertaking external work placements. Through these meaningful experiences, pupils build confidence and skills for the future.

Pupils' wider development is a significant strength. The school celebrates difference and promotes respect for different cultures and religions. Pupils learn about online safety and positive relationships. They develop their talents and interests through residential trips and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They visit farms, parks and local amenities, building confidence and using their skills in the wider community. Visitors to school, such as police officers and firefighters, further broaden their experiences and understanding of the world around them.

Pupils have a meaningful voice in school life. Leadership opportunities, such as school councillor and head student positions, allow them to share their views and take

responsibility. Pupils also participate in events alongside mainstream peers and contribute to enterprise projects. These rich experiences help pupils become increasingly confident and independent. They leave school well prepared for their next steps and later life.

Next steps

- Leaders and governors should continue to strengthen high-quality teaching across the school to further enhance pupils' learning experiences and outcomes.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Amanda Farr.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with leaders, governors, staff, pupils, parents and carers during the inspection.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan. The school predominantly caters for pupils with complex learning needs and autism.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Lisa Munro

Lead inspector:
Martin Dyer, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Sue Cox, Ofsted Inspector
Dean Prodomo, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

239

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

School capacity

218

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

47.21%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

100.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and communication, ASD - Autistic spectrum disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school
2023 leavers (revised)	100%
2022 leavers (revised)	100%

Year	This school
2021 leavers (revised)	100%

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school
2025/26 (1 term)	6.7%
2024/25 (3 term)	7.2%
2023/24 (3 term)	8.0%

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school
2025/26 (1 term)	21.4%
2024/25 (3 term)	19.0%
2023/24 (3 term)	27.6%

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 🟢

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 🟢

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional

standards expected of them.

Needs attention 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 🔴

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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