

Woodside Lodge

Woodside Farm, Wood Lane, Quorn, LE12 8DB

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Previously disaffected students, including some who refused to attend school, are eager to come to school and their attendance is excellent. In a short time since the school opened, students have made good progress with managing their behaviour and understanding what it means to be valued members of a community.
- The quality of teaching is good and students have made a good start with their achievement across a range of subjects.
- Students enjoy a varied and challenging curriculum which interests and engages them in learning.
- The school provides a safe environment in which careful attention is given to all aspects of students' safeguarding and welfare.
- The school's leaders, under the visionary guidance of the proprietor, have ensured that students' learning is at the heart of the school's ethos, and that all members of staff work to a shared vision of success for the students.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There has been insufficient time since the school opened to demonstrate that students are making rapid and sustained progress over time in English and mathematics.
- The recently introduced science curriculum is not yet securely embedded in a manner which guarantees that all students will have a coherent and comprehensive experience of the subject.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed five lessons taught by three teachers. Meetings were held with the proprietor (who is also the headteacher), the deputy headteacher, and informally with other members of staff. Discussions took place with three students.
- The views of two parents were received through a school questionnaire. The responses of five members of staff to the inspection questionnaire were also taken into consideration.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of school policies and records, including records of students' progress and examples of their work.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodside Lodge School is a day special school for up to four boys aged between 11 and 19 years who have autistic spectrum disorders.
- It is accommodated in a modern single-storey wooden building on a farm on the outskirts of Quorn in Leicestershire. Students also use a nearby farm park for practical activities, including animal care, and specialist facilities in the locality for physical education.
- There are currently four boys on the roll of the school, each of whom has a statement of special educational needs.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher of the school.
- The school's aims include 'enabling each student to have a clear pathway into life, as independent as their abilities allow'.
- The school was first registered as an independent school in May 2013. This is its first full Ofsted inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the teaching of English and mathematics to ensure that the extent of students' progress over time compares favourably with nationally expected rates of progress.
- Further develop the science curriculum to ensure that all students receive a coherent experience of the subject.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students have made good progress overall since joining the school within the last eight months. They have not been in attendance for long enough to determine whether significant gaps in previous learning are being addressed sufficiently over time. All entered the school with standards below age-related expectations in the core subjects, and all have made good progress from their individual starting points. Each student has a statement of special educational needs and reports to parents illustrate areas of progress against key targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs).

Individual students have, for example, improved their handwriting, spelling and punctuation; developed their ability to think and speak creatively; and improved their confidence in using numbers and interpreting graphs and data. Where students' confidence is secure, they demonstrate the ability to read fluently and with expression. However, attitudes to learning in the core subjects sometimes restrict the extent of progress made by a minority of students. Good progress is evident in a number of practical areas of the curriculum, including: the use of colour and media in art; understanding and application of techniques in music technology; the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for presentation and research; and the development of construction and life skills in the Forest School. In the short time that the school has been open, one student has achieved a NCFE Functional Skills Mathematics Award at Entry level 3. Students are enabled to make good progress because the staff provide effective one-to-one tuition and students are motivated by the interesting range of subjects provided.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students make good progress with their behaviour and personal development. They come to the school with negative experience, poor behaviour and, for some, refusal to attend previous schools. The school can demonstrate success in the development of positive attitudes in a short time since the school opened. Attendance by all students is excellent. They enjoy school and are eager to attend. In the majority of lessons they adopt positive attitudes which support their learning. However, there are occasions when unwillingness to cooperate and give of their best by a minority of students slows their rate of progress. Students engage particularly well in practical learning activities and demonstrate reflective and creative behaviour.

The school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The staff have devised excellent procedures for monitoring and evaluating the responses of students and the characteristics of their attitudes and emotional resilience. As a result, staff have a consistent and coordinated approach to the management of students. Relationships between adults and students are good, and students appreciate the approachability of staff. Incidents of bullying are rare and students are confident that they are safe at school. There is a supportive and positive emphasis on socially acceptable behaviour and students are taught to understand the expectation that they will make the right choices. Students are provided with suitable opportunities to learn about and experience the services and public institutions in the local community. A number of suitable contacts have been established which ensure that work experience in the local community is available for students at the appropriate time. Themes in the life skills, citizenship and religious education programmes ensure that students develop an understanding of the variety of cultures and beliefs in the wider community and are encouraged to develop respect for diversity. The school's curriculum policy states that any controversial political issues addressed in the curriculum will always be approached in a balanced way, ensuring that opposing views are considered.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and ensures that students have made an effective start in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding in key areas of learning. Teaching staff demonstrate commitment and patience in their work with students. Lessons are well prepared and staff are clear about the objectives to be achieved in each lesson. Students are encouraged to reflect on their attitudes to learning, and positive comments and praise are used effectively to motivate them. Learning activities in many lessons are practical, make use of stimulating visual and hands-on resources, and are carefully devised to engage students' interest and participation. Students comment positively about the willingness of staff to listen to them, and good questioning skills are used to encourage students to think carefully about how they approach and complete tasks. An effective reward system, based on the allocation of 'awesome points', is used effectively to increase motivation.

Most of the teaching is one-to-one and staff explain and carefully demonstrate techniques, for example in the use of spray-painting, the use of electronic music composition, or the analysis of video clips. Students are motivated and keen to produce individual work across a range of subjects. Much of the teaching takes place in the outside environment where, for example, students construct shelters in the woods, take part in archery, or care for a range of farm animals. These activities both develop confidence and provide good opportunities for students to improve their essential life skills. The assessment of students' learning is at an early stage of development. Suitable strategies, based on the use of National Curriculum levels, are used to assess the standards of students' work across the curriculum. The staff have an increasing understanding of the levels at which students are working and the targets which are required to reinforce and extend their achievements.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The school provides a good curriculum which makes excellent use of the outdoor and practical facilities in the local environment. There is a good balance between classroom-based and outdoor activities. All the required areas of learning are represented in the individual timetables of all students. There are appropriate opportunities for the accreditation of students' work through the use, for example, of Functional Skills and ASDAN awards, together with an NCFE (previously the Northern Council for Further Education) competency-based award in music. Aspects of science are taught through the Forest School curriculum, physical education and ICT. A more systematic approach to the teaching of science is relatively new. It has not yet been formulated into a coherent scheme of work which guarantees a suitable progression of experiences for each student.

There is a suitable emphasis on the development of core skills in literacy and numeracy, with learning experiences which extend into a range of additional subjects. Students enjoy a wide range of practical activities, for example in music, art, physical education and the Forest School curriculum. The curriculum addresses a number of themes particularly suited to the development of students' emotional well-being and social skills through personal social and health education, citizenship and life skills. The environment of the farm in which the school is located underpins further practical and life skills learning through challenging and rewarding farming and horticultural activities. All aspects of the curriculum are planned and developed with an appropriate emphasis on preparation for wider life beyond the school, including individualised careers education and support with the transition to further education or employment.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. All regulatory requirements are met. The school provides a safe and secure environment for students' learning and personal development. The staff have a consistent commitment to the well-being of students and the high quality of personal relationships contributes effectively to a strong sense of community. Effective arrangements are in place for the safe recruitment of staff and details of all

required checks are recorded in a single central register. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students include appropriate training at the required levels for all staff, including those with designated responsibility. Staff have a good understanding of the personal characteristics and needs of individual students and take appropriate steps to ensure their welfare. Each student has an individual behaviour plan which is based on careful analysis of the content of their statement of special educational needs, together with assessment of their behaviour in school activities. Good attention is given to the assessment of risk around all aspects of the curriculum.

Senior leaders have prepared a suitable range of school policies, including those for the management of behaviour and the prevention of bullying. These are implemented consistently by close team work and strong relationships between staff. Staff manage behaviour well and appropriate rewards and sanctions are in place. The required records of any incidents and sanctions are maintained appropriately; there are very few serious incidents. There is a suitable fire risk assessment in place and routine checks on safety equipment are completed and recorded diligently. Attendance and admission registers are maintained meticulously. Good communications with parents and carers ensure that a consistent approach is maintained to meet the needs of each individual student.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good. Leaders and managers lead by example and have high expectations for what the school can achieve. The school's leaders have ensured that all regulatory requirements are met and they demonstrate the capacity for continued improvement. The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, has created an effective vision for the school and staff are committed to the school's values. All members of staff state that they are proud to be members of staff at the school and they say that the quality of leadership is good. The school has established a clear sense of purpose in a short time and students demonstrate that they have 'bought into' the aims of the school. All members of staff place an appropriate emphasis on students' learning and are adaptable in finding ways to motivate and develop the individual learning styles of each student. As a result, all students have made significant progress in individual aspects of their behaviour, social skills and academic learning.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and further developments are already planned; a momentum for success has been established. The school provides all required information for parents and carers, including details of a suitable complaints procedure. Reports to parents and carers are thorough and provide a clear account of the levels at which students are working in each subject, together with appropriate guidance on the next steps to ensure continued progress. Those parents and carers who completed a school questionnaire demonstrate total support for the work of the school and state that they would recommend the school to others. All the requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation are met. The well-maintained premises and their location on a working farm with access to a varied external environment are central to the curriculum and the high quality learning experiences available to students. The school's website is currently in the process of further development to make it more relevant and accessible.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	139734
Inspection number	443006
DfE registration number	855/6032

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day special school for students with autistic spectrum disorders
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11–19 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jonathan Lakin
Headteacher	Jonathan Lakin
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,000
Telephone number	01509 415474
Email address	info@woodside-lodge.co.uk

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