



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR WOODSIDE ACADEMY

<b>Name of Academy:</b>	Woodside Academy
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Katherine Freame
<b>Hub:</b>	London Special and AP Hub
<b>Academy phase:</b>	All through Specialist academy
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	London South East Academies Trust

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	16/11/2023
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review:</b>	First review
<b>Date of last QA Review:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Good
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	13/06/2023



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#### Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host academy leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

**Leadership at all levels**                      Leading

**Quality of provision and outcomes**   Leading

**AND**

**Quality of provision and  
outcomes for disadvantaged  
pupils and pupils with additional  
needs**

**Area of excellence**                      Not applicable

**Previously accredited valid areas  
of excellence**                      Not applicable

**Overall peer evaluation estimate**      Leading

*The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades.  
The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is  
developmental not judgmental.*

## **1. Context and character of the academy**

Woodside Academy is a large specialist academy in Erith, Southeast London. Pupils and teachers can look out from some of their classrooms, across the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, and the South Downs.

Woodside is an all through academy. All 201 pupils have education, health and care plans (EHCP). The most common special educational need and/or disability (SEND) diagnosis for the cohort is autism. Woodside has more pupils with increasingly complex SEND coming onto roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and into Key Stage 1.

Woodside pupils benefit from specialist spaces. These include sensory circuit rooms, a range of libraries, soft play rooms, a cafe and a variety of outdoor areas, including a 'daily mile' track, and a mixture of all weather, and grassed play areas.

Fabulous art is integrated into every corridor and classroom, clearly showing 'the footprint of the child', across all stages and ages.

Woodside is an academy where the staff are proud that the core purpose of the academy is driven by the complex needs of the pupils that come. As the headteacher explained, "You live and learn from the pupils, they are the ones that teach you!"

### **2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well**

- The headteacher at Woodside has developed an extended leadership team of 13 colleagues. These leaders are specialists that lead across the range of the academy's work. Motivated to quality assure provision and outcomes, they support staff to achieve consistently high standards. As the headteacher explained, 'If we see a problem, we don't walk past it.'
- Leaders continue to refine and revise the curriculum as the academy cohort changes. Up to Key Stage 4, pupils are split into discovery and explorer routes. The discovery route, where pupils have more complex SEND, makes up a larger percentage of the cohort each year. Curriculum content is becoming more bespoke. Each pupil has separate personal development, academic and EHCP targets. Consequently, pupils' curricula content matches their distinct needs, and they have every chance to make great progress.
- Leaders have designed the Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 curriculum to include academic and vocational learning, as well as each pupil's personal development

targets. Pupils who can, are encouraged into college placements post-16. Those remaining are the pupils with more complex SEND needs and will benefit from more time at Woodside.

- Leaders understand that many pupils make small step progress across their time at Woodside, due to their specific complex SEND needs. Evidencing this is fundamentally important to explaining what strong progress looks like, especially when specialist academies have no national benchmarks. With this in place, all members of the community have a breadth of evidence to help celebrate and share the progress every pupil makes.
- Acceleration teams (ATs) provide impetus to academy improvement. The ATs are cross-phase and include teachers and teaching assistants, with a focus on separate aspects of the academy's development. For example, this year projects have included developing displays, libraries, and the work experience offer. These ATs generate real enthusiasm for academy improvement, and have given colleagues the opportunity to input ideas, and integrate a wider range of creative skills into the academy offer. As one teaching assistant explained, 'It's about being involved, being part of the community and sharing knowledge throughout the academy'. Pupils benefit from this shared drive for academy improvement.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop their own leadership skills. Roles include becoming a member of the 'Student Council' (currently campaigning for safer traffic control around the academy), 'dog mentors' for the academy dogs 'Miss Honey' and 'Mr Bramble' (developing pupils social skills, while taking the dogs into the community), 'Positivity Ambassadors' (who lead on difficult subjects like anti-bullying) and play leaders (older pupils who lead play in the EYFS with younger pupils). With these responsibilities, wider social skills are developed around a needed activity, and pupils' confidence is nurtured. As one pupil reflected, 'I've really enjoyed having the opportunity for leadership, and to help my friends'.

## **2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...**

...no points for improvement identified.

### 3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well...

- Throughout the primary phase, experiential play opportunities are consistently planned for and prepared. Staff plan together across key stages to ensure these continuous provision activities are varied across each day and week. Prompts support adults and pupils to make the most of any engagement in these activities. For example, “Can you build a house with these sticks?” is a prompt for the activity, although there is nothing to restrict pupils’ own creative use of these, to build anything they wanted to.
- A range of communication support strategies for pupils are available across the academy. Aided Language Boards (ALBs) are freely available to pupils both in individual communication folders, and alongside activities in class, including continuous provision. These are set up with a colourful semantics structure, which then supports further sentence development. Although picture exchange communication systems are used on an individual basis, ALBs have been found to be more globally successful, not least when transferring skills into the pupils’ home environments.
- Pupils develop independent learning strategies throughout their time at Woodside. For example in Key Stage 3, during practical mathematics and practical English lessons, pupils discussed what resources they needed for the session, and then worked collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Pupils are confident in this way of working and, when some need a little support, staff are there to facilitate this, giving every pupil the opportunity to be as independent as they can.
- The academy has invested heavily in the introduction of a synthetic phonics scheme, launched in September 2022. Some staff initially had some concerns about the need for a synthetic phonics approach, with neuro diverse learners. Now, in its second year, teachers and leaders can identify impact. Staff teach phonics with confidence and have detailed assessments that can identify pupils’ progression. Interactive play leaders (the midday staff) are knowledgeable and can reference phonic strategies in their interactions with pupils. For example, the initial ‘ZZZZZ sound’ was emphasised when supporting a pupil to do up a zip. Pupils use this wide range of skilled support to ensure they have the best opportunities to develop as either early or confident readers.
- In the EYFS, a range of engaging strategies are used to start pupils on their phonics journeys, including a ‘phonics ship’, with a microphone to encourage pupils’ to emphasise sounds, tablet sounds games (supported by cued articulation), or writing letter shapes in shaving foam. Teachers plan these activities to meet each pupil’s distinct needs and this planning enables individual staff to deliver adapted activities for every lesson. Lost learning time is minimised and pupils have every opportunity to make the best progress they can in this incredibly important phase.

- Pupils are helped to understand their learning environment by having some consistent aspects in their classrooms. These include a reading corner, a Zones of Regulation board and phonics prompts. Classrooms have displays with practical English and practical mathematics. These environmental prompts, support pupils stay on track across their lessons.
- Cross phase working has been a focus area for development and improvement. Teaching staff are given time, and the opportunity to understand the full range of the academy's cohort. This is particularly important for subject leaders. These leaders are more aware of the increasing complexity of the cohort and can plan for it well.
- In Post-16 provision, work experience carousels are well-structured, and pupils are actively engaged in meaningful activities that link to clear learning outcomes, demonstrating a clear progression of skills. Teaching staff use a mixture of prompting and questioning to determine what each pupil has learned during each activity. In this way teachers have the information they need to plan accurate next steps for learning and maximise pupil outcomes.

### **3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...**

...Woodside had a growing alumni to show and celebrate the success of pupils transitioning into successful adults with SEND.

### **4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well...**

- Whenever a pupil comes on roll, the academy invests resources into developing strong, positive relationships with families. This starts early, beginning with visits to the previous academy, informal coffee mornings, and supportive conversations for parents and carers to help pupils' regulation and communication. In this way pupils can make a flying start to their time at Woodside.
- All pupils have a distinct 'named reader' to help them with their reading in any spare moments in the week, sharing a favourite book. Pupils build on these shared relationships while developing a love of reading.
- Everyone at Woodside is committed to improving the pupils' transition experience across the academy. This has reduced pupils' anxiety, built pupils' tolerance, and helped pupils develop coping strategies for change. Pupils are consequently well prepared for these transitions and settle better into new ways of working as they grow.
- Where pupils struggle blending sounds, speech and language therapists have direct input. With this extra specialist input, teaching staff can revise how they

deliver the key seven areas of phonological awareness, used in the academy's chosen phonics programme. Pupils supported in this way, who previously had difficulty making significant progress, can decode more, and make further progress with their early reading and communication.

- The 'Observe Wait Listen' approach is used consistently across the academy by staff. Support staff give pupils with complex SEND the time they need to process their thinking, as opposed to being prompted to finish a task by an adult. This strategy means staff have a clearer picture of what each pupil can achieve, while pupils develop their ability to make choices and develop their own independence.

#### **4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...**

...pupils had private, individualised discussions when being introduced to potentially challenging RSHE subjects, to help decide the best ways to deliver this learning.

#### **5. Area of Excellence**

Not applicable on this visit.

**This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.**

**Schools can access the Schools Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables academies to connect with other academies in your hub and across the national network of schools.**

**Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow academy leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a academy or attend an online webinar hosted by a academy, with outstanding provision in that area.**

**Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.**