

Woodbrook Vale School

Address: Grasmere Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 2ST

Unique reference number (URN): 137401

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

The achievement of pupils in national examinations over 3 years has been close to or above national averages. Disadvantaged pupils' achievement has been largely close to national averages. As a result, pupils typically leave the school with the qualifications they need to take the positive next steps towards their chosen pathways of employment, education or training.

Pupils' responses in lessons and work in books show that they achieve and learn the curriculum well. During class discussion, pupils are generally articulate and explore what they are learning in depth. However, sometimes, adaptations to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are not sufficient to support pupils' learning. When this happens, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils learn the knowledge and skills they need to read, write and use mathematics effectively. Pupils who find reading tricky learn what they need to become more confident, fluent readers.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Overall, leaders have established a well-designed curriculum. Curriculum plans are logically organised so pupils learn knowledge in appropriate steps. The curriculum is broad and balanced. However, the curriculum in key stage 4 does not clarify the exact knowledge regarding the world religions that pupils must learn. As a result, teachers do not thoroughly teach this aspect of the curriculum.

High-quality teaching enables pupils to learn the curriculum well. Teachers have the necessary subject knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum effectively. They provide effective support, when they find that pupils misunderstand or do not remember something. This ensures that pupils do not fall behind. More recently, leaders have implemented effective approaches to support pupils, who have not secured basic knowledge in reading and mathematics.

Generally, teachers adapt learning activities well to meet pupils' needs. Occasionally, teachers' adaptations do not support some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well enough. When this happens, these pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and quality of teaching. When leaders find areas not working as well as they should, they take swift and robust action to make improvements.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

When pupils first arrive at the school, leaders swiftly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders work well with parents, carers and external specialists, when designing support plans for these pupils.

Leaders provide staff with clear guidance to understand these pupils' needs. Supported by helpful professional development, staff have started to improve the way they adapt learning activities to meet pupils' needs. The impact of this is particularly noticeable for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. These pupils also benefit from the school's recently introduced bespoke provision 'the zone'. Leaders routinely check how well staff support pupils' needs. They make alterations and provide further training when needs arise.

Leaders' use of additional funding ensures that disadvantaged pupils typically do well at school. Leaders pay great attention to the needs of children in care. They work well with the headteacher of the virtual school at the local authority and ensure any agreed provision is in place for these pupils.

Leaders' use of alternative provision is a positive feature of the school. They carefully choose appropriate provision and keep in regular contact with providers. This ensures that pupils have positive and coherent experiences at school and at alternative provision.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have successfully established an ethos among staff and leaders that ensures pupils' best interests drive the decisions taken. Leaders appropriately prioritise the needs of vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure that school resources are effectively used to provide for the specific needs of pupils. For example, leaders' investment in the creation of 'the zone' provides the bespoke curriculum some pupils need to succeed at school.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs improvement at the school. Along with reports from leaders, governors use evaluations from external specialists to identify precisely what to develop. When improvements are required, governors hold leaders accountable and ensure that the necessary improvements happen in a timely manner. Governors ensure they meet statutory obligations.

Leaders' programme of professional development develops staff expertise over time effectively. Leaders ensure that training clearly links to the school's development needs. They carefully choose the most effective training approaches so that staff learn what they need to improve their work. Early career teachers are well supported and make a positive start in the profession. Staff value the development opportunities they have at the school, including opportunities for securing promotion.

Leaders have the confidence of staff. Morale is high. Staff appreciate that leaders consider staff wellbeing and workload. This contributes towards staff choosing to work at the school over many years.

The school is well regarded by parents and carers.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's approaches to support pupils' character development and understanding of fundamental British values are well embedded. Pupils understand the importance of respecting the different beliefs and lifestyles found in modern society. During events such as

'culture day', pupils proudly celebrate their own backgrounds. They also explore, with interest, the ways different people live their lives around the world. Leaders ensure that pupils engage thoughtfully in contemporary debates during personal development sessions and assemblies. However, the opportunities pupils have to study world faiths in key stage 4 are not considered with sufficient clarity to ensure that pupils learn about diverse religious beliefs.

Pupils learn about and understand the features of positive relationships. They are also well equipped to deal with difficult relationships. Staff ensure that pupils understand how to maintain positive physical and mental health. This includes teaching pupils how to stay safe at home, in the community and when online. Pupils appreciate and benefit from the school's pastoral team that helps deal with the issues that young people face in contemporary society.

Pupils very much value the school's enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities. They benefit from the educational visits to places of national and international interest. Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, take advantage of the wide range of clubs offered by the school. Leaders support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to take part in these opportunities.

Leaders have put in place an effective careers education programme. Pupils learn about the world of work through work experience and work-related learning opportunities. Well-trained staff deliver bespoke careers advice to help pupils shape their ideas. This helps pupils make informed decisions about their subject choices in key stages 4 and 5. Working with local employers, colleges and training providers, leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn about their choices beyond Year 11.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' overall attendance has been declining for 2 years, and school records show that this remains the case. Similarly, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been below national averages for 2 years. Leaders work with parents and carers to identify the barriers to school attendance. Leaders also put in place support based on the best available research. This has led to some improvements for some pupils, but too many pupils still have low attendance.

Pupils behave very well at school. They demonstrate the school's values and live up to leaders' high expectations. Older pupils serve as positive role models for younger pupils. Because leaders have set out clear routines, the school is a calm and orderly environment. In lessons, pupils work without distraction or disruption. During social times and when moving around the school, pupils behave sensibly and show care for others' needs. On the rare occasions of bullying or unacceptable behaviour, staff quickly and consistently use the behaviour policy. They ensure that the school's values are restored and positive behaviour returns.

The school supports pupils, who struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour effectively. As a result, these pupils learn how to deal with negative emotions and maintain positive behaviour.

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

The school's well-established positive ethos permeates the school. Staff support pupils to develop admirable character traits. Pupils demonstrate these throughout the school day. For example, pupils are typically polite and helpful. They show kindness towards each other and staff. Staff teach pupils how to make positive contributions to their communities. Pupils show concern for, and actively support, vulnerable members of the school community and wider society. Pupils demonstrate this through their conduct at school and in their impressive community-service projects. Unwelcome behaviour and bullying are very rare. When they happen, staff ensure that issues are resolved swiftly and do not re-occur.

Pupils enjoy learning and take their studies seriously. They know that learning is important and work hard in lessons. Pupils typically show determination, when facing something tricky to learn. Some pupils, however, struggle to maintain regular school attendance. The school is rightly focusing on helping these pupils. The impact of the school's support to improve attendance is showing early signs of positive impact. However, there is still more to do.

In national examinations, pupils typically achieve grades at least in line with national averages. Many pupils achieve above national averages. This is because teaching is largely effective and pupils work hard. Typically, staff ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities overcome barriers to learning. Overall, the school prepares pupils well to take positive next steps in their learning.

Many pupils enjoy developing their talents and interests during school clubs. For example, many proudly represent their school in competitive sport. Others take part in the school drama productions, such as 'The Addams Family'. The school gives pupils lots of opportunities to assume leadership roles at the school, such as in the diversity team, the eco-award team and the strategic oversight team.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they continually strengthen their work to improve the attendance of some groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
 - Leaders should continue to develop staff with the expertise needed to adapt learning activities, so that learning is precisely adapted to meet the needs of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders should clarify the curriculum regarding world religions in key stage 4 so that this aspect of the curriculum is taught thoroughly.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Woodbrook Vale School trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rachael Fraser, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Brown.

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

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 school makes use of 15 alternative provisions, including 14 that are unregistered.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The school's special educational needs coordinator joined the school in September 2023.

Headteacher: Rachael Fraser

Lead inspector:

Al Mistrano, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Richard Vasey, Ofsted Inspector

Damian Painton, Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Thompson, Ofsted Inspector

Janis Warren, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

830

Below average

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.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

830

Below average

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.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

16.14%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 28.9%

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

2.53%

Close to average

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.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.94%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below 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.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	52.5%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58.6%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	59.6%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	51.2	46.0	Above
2023/24 (final)	52.4	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	54.1	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.44	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.43	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	8.7%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.7%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	26.9%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	30.3	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	39.1	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35.7	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.16	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.45	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	8.7%	53.1%	-44.4 pp
2023/24 (final)	36.7%	53.1%	-16.5 pp
2022/23 (final)	26.9%	52.4%	-25.5 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	30.3	50.4	-20.2
2023/24 (final)	39.1	50.0	-10.9
2022/23 (final)	35.7	50.3	-14.6

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.16	0.16	-0.32
2022/23 (final)	-0.45	0.17	-0.61

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	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	89%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

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	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.2%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.0%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.7%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	20.2%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	19.4%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	20.0%	26.5%	Below

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.

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 <https://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 2026



