

# Woking High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	125270
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	381071
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8 – 9 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Christine Jones HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1186
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roy Wernham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Abbott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Morton Road Horsell Woking GU21 4TJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 888447
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<b>Email address</b>	info@wokinghigh.surrey.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381071



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional inspector

John Taylor

Additional inspector

Brian Skelton

Additional inspector

Ann Cox

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a total of 41 lessons taught by 41 teachers of which four were joint observations with a member of the senior team. In addition, inspectors made short visits to eight lessons where students were receiving extra support. Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors as well as school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at key documentation provided by the school including improvement plans, analyses of the attainment and progress of students currently in the school, records related to the behaviour and safety of students and 212 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It meets the current floor standard for attainment. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Many students are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is in line with that found nationally. The overall proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is higher. The school has a special unit with places for up to nine visually impaired students, six of which are currently filled.

The school population is very stable with the proportion of students entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times below the national average for secondary schools. The school has gained a number of awards including International School status, Investors in Careers and Investor in Community Engagement (ICE). The school received re-designation for specialist status in technology in May 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Woking High is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because some students do not achieve as well as they could, especially in mathematics. Students, parents and carers have a very positive view of the school and would recommend it to others.
- Students' achievement is good and they make good progress. In 2011, almost two thirds of Year 11 gained five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Since the previous inspection, students' progress and standards in mathematics have improved from a very low starting point but have not yet reached the high levels achieved in English. Overall standards in mathematics are now above average but some students with low prior attainment do not make the progress they should.
- Teaching is good and, in some lessons, outstanding. In outstanding lessons students are excited by their learning, and know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Where teachers do not plan with enough precision to meet different learning needs students do not make as much progress. The use of assessment to support learning has improved since the previous inspection although some teachers do not make sure students follow up on the advice they are given.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. In their responses to the questionnaires, parents and carers, as well as students, were confident that behaviour was at least good. A very few parents and carers expressed concerns that lessons were occasionally disrupted by bad behaviour but inspection evidence does not support this view.
- The headteacher and senior staff know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use performance management well to support teachers in developing their practice. This is closely monitored and linked to outcomes for students to keep a strong focus on improving achievement. Governors are very supportive and challenging of the school and the senior leadership.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress made by students with low prior attainment, especially in mathematics, thereby raising their achievement to good, by:
  - ensuring all learning activities are precisely matched to their abilities
  - providing plentiful opportunities for them to practise and develop their numeracy skills in other subjects.
  
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - encouraging students to be more involved in shaping and taking responsibility for their own learning
  - providing sufficient opportunities for students to reflect and act on the advice and guidance given by their teachers.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with standards overall that are just above those found nationally and they make good progress to reach above average grades at GCSE. Outcomes in design and technology are high reflecting the success of the school's specialist status for technology. In lessons seen during the inspection students made good progress. This includes those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those from minority ethnic groups. Pakistani heritage students make particularly good progress and reach high standards. Parents and carers were happy with the progress their children make in the school. Inspection evidence showed that students make the most progress in lessons that are fast paced and challenging; students have to work hard to keep up with the teacher but they said that they enjoy this.

The best learning was seen where teachers gave students every opportunity to think issues through for themselves and engage with a variety of interesting and stimulating activities. Students understood what they were going to learn and at the end of the lessons both the teacher and students were clear about the levels of success. This process is supported by regular and effective use of assessment information by both teachers and students as part of everyday teaching and learning practices. Progress is slower where the pace of the lesson drops and there are limited opportunities for students to be active and involved in their learning. The school provides good individual support for disabled students and those with special educational needs and these students make good progress. Students attached to the visually impaired unit also make good progress. They are very well integrated into the main school and receive excellent support both in lessons and in their individual sessions.

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The development of literacy skills is embedded across the curriculum. In many of the lessons visited, students were actively practising their literacy skills such as reading aloud to the class. The use of numeracy in different subjects is less well established, although it is developing and students sometimes find it difficult transferring and using their mathematics skills in other subject areas.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is good overall and improving. Parents and carers agreed that their children are well taught at this school. Outstanding lessons, some of which were observed during the inspection, are characterised by a fast pace that engages the students, with no opportunities for them to lose interest or drift off task. The best lessons are sharply focused on learning, driven by clear, explicit and shared objectives. All students, including those who are disabled, visually impaired or with special educational needs, are fully involved and participating in the learning activities planned to meet their individual needs. Relationships between teachers and their students are excellent with good humour and mutual respect evident. Social and moral development is promoted through well-structured group work and opportunities for students to debate their own ideas. For example, this was observed during a Latin lesson where students were comparing Roman politics with our own. In these sessions students are actively engaged in discussing and learning from each other.

Learning is consolidated through rigorous curriculum planning that ensures continuity and creates strong links between individual lessons. Curriculum planning for lessons also capitalises on the school's international school status to promote students' spiritual and cultural development.

Where the teaching observed by inspectors was satisfactory, learning is over-directed by the teachers. As a result, students are not given enough opportunities to ask their own questions and be more directly involved in their learning. These lessons do not give students enough opportunities to develop key skills such as interpreting and analysing information and using the outcomes to plan their own work. Teachers' planning for these lessons does not always cover the needs of students in the class with a range of different abilities, particularly in mathematics for low-attaining students.

Evidence gathered from a review of some of the students' exercise books across a range of subjects showed that students' work is marked frequently and regularly. The quality of feedback given to the students regarding the standards they are reaching and how to improve was constructive and gave students opportunities to respond to the advice. However, not all teachers made sure that students took enough advantage of this guidance to shape and improve their subsequent written work.

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## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students are very supportive and proud of their school. They greatly enjoy being members of this harmonious and friendly school where any form of misbehaviour is rare. When given appropriate opportunities, students make an exceptional contribution to their own learning and they respond maturely to opportunities to work independently and collaborate extremely well on group tasks. A strong sense of community exists outside of lessons as students socialise widely during their breaks with minimum supervision. Students say 'it's always like this – we don't need teachers to help us behave'. Students are certain that they feel very safe in school and that any issues they might have are dealt with quickly. The inspection found little evidence to support the concerns about behaviour in lessons raised by a very few parents and carers. The students who were interviewed indicated that poor behaviour and low-level disruption in lessons happened rarely and did not impede their learning. Scrutiny of behavioural records shows that this is the case over time. Students from the visually impaired unit are completely integrated into the school and well cared for by both students and staff alike.

Students enjoy very much coming to school as evidenced by their attendance, which is above average, and their punctual arrival to school and lessons. Exclusions are rare and the school works hard to support those very few students who may struggle with their behaviour. Incidents of bullying are very unusual and students say it is not a problem in the school. Students are confident that, where bullying does occur, it is dealt with promptly by staff and they acknowledge that the school is particularly rigorous in following up on any racist incidents. Students are very aware of the different forms bullying may take and understand how this may affect them, and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The school effectively monitors any concerns regarding students' health and safety and involves parents, carers and external agencies at all levels.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, senior leadership team and staff have focused very successfully on the areas for development identified at the previous inspection. Information on students' performance is now used much more effectively to improve teaching and raise standards. A rigorous approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning gives the senior leadership team an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in different curriculum areas. The performance management of teachers is closely linked to their professional development and this is having a good impact on improving the quality of teaching.

The school takes exemplary care of the students. Robust procedures are in place to ensure students' safety and all current safeguarding requirements are met. Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well supported and their needs known and understood by the school. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school leadership and indicate that communications are good.

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Curriculum planning provides a wide range of GCSE courses in Key Stage 4 and includes work-related options such as business studies. There are opportunities for students to study a wide range of languages including Latin. Students say they particularly enjoy learning other languages and this has had a positive impact on improving their wider literacy skills. Students also say they find teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects very motivating and they appreciate the willingness of staff to run extra sessions where there is a demand. The curriculum also places a strong emphasis on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. International School status is used to very good effect in this area as is the very effective cross-curricular programme called 'Day 11'. On these days the normal curriculum is suspended and students benefit greatly from an intensive programme of special activities with a wide variety of themes.

The governing body has a very positive relationship with the school and its input is appreciated, especially by the senior leadership team. Governors are effective in holding the school to account and challenging the senior leadership team about students' achievement. The close links and good communication between school staff and governors secure a firm commitment to equal opportunities and ensure that any form of discrimination, should it arise, is tackled promptly. The school is determined that all students will achieve their full potential and this drive, together with a past record of continuous improvement, maintains the school's strong and secure capacity for further improvement.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



12 March 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Woking High School, GU21 4TJ**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and being in your lessons. We were impressed with the pride you take in your school. This letter is to tell you what we found.

- Woking High is a good and improving school.
- Your achievement is good and you reach good standards by the end of Year 11 although you do not achieve as well in mathematics as you do in English.
- Your teachers mostly plan interesting lessons but sometimes they are not tailored closely enough to your individual needs.
- You tell us you feel very safe in school and you come to school regularly and on time.
- You told us that bullying is not a problem in your school but that you know what to do if it does occur and are confident that the school would deal with any issues promptly.
- You behave very well in lessons and around the school. You enjoy your learning and each other's company and this makes your school a very friendly community.
- There are many opportunities to take interesting courses, especially in Key Stage 4, and you really enjoy the extra languages you can learn.
- The headteacher and her staff are committed to making sure you are always well cared for and able to fulfil your potential.

We have asked the school to help you to make as much progress in mathematics as you do in English by planning lessons that are suitable for your needs. We would also like more teaching to be outstanding by encouraging you to be closely involved in your learning and making sure you act on the advice and guidance given to you by your teachers. You can help in this by listening to your teachers and following up their advice.

Good luck and best wishes for the future.

Christine Jones  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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