

# Woodrush Community High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116937
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358058
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carolyn Carnaghan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1018
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	78
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr C Sambrook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr C King
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Shawhurst Lane Wythall, Worcestershire B47 5JW
<b>Telephone number</b>	0844 4771814
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 32 lessons taught by 31 teachers. They looked at the school's work, including its policies and plans. They scrutinised 107 responses to parental questionnaires and meetings were held with groups of students, staff and governors.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How well do students achieve in the sixth form and why does their achievement appear to be relatively less successful than in the main school?
- To what extent are the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievement consistent across all subjects at GCSE?
- How effective are leaders and managers in promoting achievement across the whole school?

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school where most students are from White British backgrounds. It has specialist status in technology. Woodrush forms part of a consortium with several other schools and colleges in its vicinity where a small number of students in Key Stages 4 and 5 take a range of subjects that they cannot pursue in their own school. There is a higher than average, and increasing, proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and a lower than average proportion of those eligible for free school meals. The school holds several awards including that for International Schools.

**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

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school with a small, improving and increasingly successful sixth form. Students and staff work very happily together at Woodrush and across the school there is an ethos of caring, getting on well together and being on the same team, working towards shared goals. A typical comment from a student is, 'It's a wonderful school that helps us all.'

Students make outstanding progress in the main school, from starting points that are broadly average. Later on, most students pursue further studies in institutions beyond Woodrush, but the small number that stay on or come to the sixth form to follow a wide range of courses, make good progress. Attainment is high in Years 7 to 11 for all groups of students, while those with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. Students feel extremely safe at school, understanding very clearly how to behave safely in all circumstances, including around the difficult and uneven site. Students' behaviour is outstanding and it is the norm to show respect and courtesy for others. There is outstanding understanding of how to live healthily, with most students taking up extra sport outside of lessons, joining clubs for exercise or cheerleading, for instance, and competing for their school.

The Woodrush community is extremely well supported by all those involved with it. Many students give of their time to help others. They organise and deliver assemblies. Taking the lead is expected and delivered by many students and, because of this, along with high levels of attendance and of basic skills in English, mathematics and information communication technology (ICT), they are very well prepared for the challenges of the future. Specialist technology status helps ensure all students achieve well in ICT.

The outstanding attainment of students in Years 7 to 11 is promoted through excellent teaching and curricular provision. The curriculum is good overall because it does not support high quality outcomes for students in the sixth form. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. However, sixth form students' personal development, their attitudes and understanding of the world, their depth of caring and contribution to their school, are outstanding. Many progress well in the sixth form, going on to higher academic institutions of repute. A student said, 'You can do as well as you want to here. The support is fantastic.'

Leaders and managers ensure teachers plan and deliver their lessons to a very high standard, providing equal opportunities for everyone to do well. The level of support given to those who are high-fliers, or need some extra help, is outstanding. There is no discrimination evident in the chances provided for everyone. While senior leaders have provided for outstanding achievement in the main school, the sixth form provision does not fully match the needs of a few of the students who stay on at Woodrush. This is starting to take shape, with a broader more diverse curriculum, but has been relatively

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recent following changes in leadership. The outstanding provision in the main school and the new developments in the sixth form indicate that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

The governing body is often present in school, regularly helping and supporting, but it has not yet developed the confidence to fully challenge the school's senior leaders. It has not formed a full understanding of the challenges facing the school and, as such, it cannot fully hold the school to account.

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

- Raise attainment in the sixth form by:
  - building on the recent developments in the curriculum and ensuring this fully matches the needs of all students.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
  - developing the governing body's understanding of the school
  - raising the confidence of the governing body to challenge the school and fully hold it to account.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

Students make outstanding progress in most subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4 and clearly enjoy their learning. Attainment is well above average for all groups of students, including the increasing number with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who also achieve very highly. Teachers ensure that very well planned lessons, backed up with the outstanding use of assessment, deliver challenges that excite and inspire. Students understand how to achieve better, and they analyse their next steps with their teachers so they know how to go on with their work. Students work very effectively in pairs and teams, in and out of class. The more able can take qualifications early, moving on to greater challenges, while those who need support report that this is always forthcoming so that the overwhelming majority exceed their academic targets. Attainment in the key areas of English and mathematics is at the heart of the school and it is rising steadily.

Students' understanding of safety in all activities is outstanding, shown as they move from lesson to lesson or, for example, in science or physical education lessons. Their behaviour is also outstanding and where occasional lapses do occur they are quickly resolved. Students show excellent understanding of the need and means to be healthy. Many participate competitively during and after school in a wide range of sports, dance and outdoor activities. The school community ethos is very strongly supported by all and attendance is high. Students take courses in leadership, developing very good peer relationships. Behaviour is exemplary for all groups of students with very few instances where students are taken out of lessons or excluded. Students in Years 11 and 13 train as peer mentors and also help support Year 7 when they arrive. Students show a keen interest in ethical issues and get involved, with members of the local community, in the 'learning to lead' programme. This all helps develop their employability, economic understanding and enterprise skills to an outstanding level. Achievement in ICT is outstanding, with everyone gaining grade A\* to C at GCSE.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are outstanding, leading to very high levels of achievement. Assessment is used very effectively throughout lessons, providing both students and teachers with vital information as to how well learning is going and what needs to happen next. Academic monitoring is outstanding so that teachers can readily assess areas of weakness and set students challenging and relevant targets. A significant proportion of lessons are outstanding, and lesson observations prove that teachers build up pace and enjoyment to engage their students' interests. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their planning is exemplary, setting a sure foundation for the delivery of such high quality lessons. Praise and encouragement help reward students' work and excellent behaviour allows progress to happen unhindered.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is outstanding in Key Stages 3 and 4. It is good overall because it does not support such high attainment in the sixth form. There are four pathways open to students in the main school, each with an element of guided choice to ensure the needs and aspirations of each learner are met. The fast-track programme allows able students to develop their talents across a wide range of courses and examinations. There is thoroughly targeted alternative provision for those who need it and this ensures the curriculum meets all needs. Students enjoy a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. These support academic, sporting and cultural

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development effectively. The school's specialism in technology has helped all students at Key Stage 4 to acquire at least two GCSE passes at grades A\* to C in ICT.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding, ensuring students feel very safe within a calm yet vibrant atmosphere. Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable have dedicated rooms where they can go for extra support and help, and a team of non-teaching staff ensure the well-being of their charges. They also liaise with families and community agencies. The learning heads of house provide outstanding continuous support regarding achievement, option choices and academic need. There are extremely effective procedures to promote attendance and monitor the academic and pastoral needs of vulnerable students. Induction is very well supported and ensures smooth transitions between key stages.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has made a most effective start to his tenure and staff speak of his open and transparent leadership, leading to everyone's greater personal involvement with the school. Senior leaders transmit high expectations and ambitions to staff and students. For students, there are also high expectations of involvement in their learning, standards of behaviour and achievement. For staff, there are clear standards expected for planning, use of assessment in learning, maintaining and honing their skills through training, and ensuring students' progress. The leadership and management culture is now one of greater accountability and responsibility. Monitoring of teaching helps teachers know how well they are doing, with target setting and a focus on marking, for example, used to improve their practice. Leadership and management have excellent qualities but they are good overall because outcomes and progress in the sixth form remain lower than in the main school.

The governing body discharges its responsibilities appropriately. It is a proud and dedicated group, ensuring the school is well thought of in the community. The governing body can point to improvements since the headteacher's arrival and promotes communication and liaison with families. It helps ensure safeguarding is outstanding, with excellent systems in place, robustly monitored and assured. For example, non-teaching staff maintain a clean and tidy site, without hazards and break times are monitored consistently and well by a dedicated team. However, governance is satisfactory because the governing body is not systematically involved in evaluating the school's effectiveness, and places an over-reliance on senior leaders to provide analysis. As a consequence, they are not as directly involved in setting priorities for improvement as they might be.

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Regular liaison with parents and carers ensures their views are influential. This is a key strength of the school's work, engendering trust and confidence. Similarly, educational partners are used very effectively to ensure curriculum pathways are open in other institutions. Local agencies work very closely with the school providing extra support for vulnerable students, and independent consultants are used to evaluate how well the school provides for all learners.

The community, be it locally or further afield, is seen as key to helping students gain the understanding and confidence to tackle their education and their future lives. There are strong links with the wider community beyond school, leading to the international schools' award. Students' interest in the cultures of others comes across in lessons, for example in music, where Gamelan is very popular. The promotion of equal opportunities is central to the school, as a consequence, progress and outcomes for all groups of students are very positive.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Sixth form

Most of the relatively small number of students who choose to come to Woodrush sixth form do so because they already love their school. Others do so because it affords them a highly personal experience, where courses are offered when interests are expressed and there is an outstanding level of support for a wide range of abilities.

Students can now follow a range of courses, both at Woodrush and at other partner institutions, both academic and vocational. This means that students express a high degree of satisfaction with their experience here. They develop extremely well as rounded individuals, providing care and support for younger students, mentoring and organising events for them. Sixth form students run assemblies, lead houses and hold competitions



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for the whole school. The ethos is to serve and be supportive of others. Most say Woodrush provides them with the opportunity to achieve and be successful.

Teaching is currently good, with teachers having expert knowledge of their subjects. Most lessons provide for individual exploration, discovery and debate. The curriculum is beginning to develop a more tailored approach, offering opportunities for courses to be designed across qualifications, both academic and vocational. Most students have historically been able to achieve their main university choices, but progress in the past has been satisfactory. The new head of sixth form is starting to see his curriculum initiatives paying off, with improvements in progress. With much improved teaching and excellent personal development, current progress is good.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents are happy with their children's education and feel that the school is very safe. A small minority expressed concerns that they are not helped to support their children's education and that the school does not help their children to have a healthy lifestyle. The inspection team explored these issues and found that there is excellent and developing communication with parents, and students have many opportunities to engage with healthy activities and to learn about a healthy lifestyle.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodrush Community High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,018 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	58	40	37	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	57	53	45	42	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	57	53	41	38	7	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	55	40	37	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	56	52	44	41	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	45	43	40	11	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	36	53	50	8	8	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	39	56	52	3	3	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	46	47	44	6	6	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	47	47	44	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	34	55	51	4	4	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	49	46	51	48	1	1	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	56	41	38	3	3	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**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.**



6 October 2010

Dear Students,

**Inspection of Woodrush Community High School, Wythall, B47 5JW**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we recently inspected your school. We really enjoyed meeting and talking to so many of you. You were very courteous and thoughtful, helping us to find our way around and showing us how to locate different classes we wanted to see in lessons.

The inspection team were very impressed with your attitudes to school and find that your school gives you an outstanding education. You get on very well with your work, cooperating effectively, sharing ideas and concentrating hard on doing your best. You clearly understand your targets and what you need to do to improve your work. Many of you give your time generously and help in all kinds of ways around the school, such as through the leadership scheme and peer mentoring.

Although we found that Woodrush is an outstanding school there are a few things we have asked your senior leaders to do better:

- raise attainment in the sixth form by ensuring the curriculum always matches the needs of all its students
- improve governance by ensuring all members of the governing body fully understand the school and feel confident in challenging and holding it to account.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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