

Woodside School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101485
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	365444
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Janet Thompson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brad Smith
Headteacher	Audrey Chamberlain
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
School address	Halt Robin Road Belvedere Kent DA17 6DW
Telephone number	01322 433494
Fax number	01322 433080
Email address	head@woodside.bexley.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out, at no notice, by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Inspectors visited 11 parts of lessons and carried out short observations in 22 other lessons, 24 teachers were observed. Inspectors also visited an assembly and met with the headteacher, staff, the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors, a small group of parents and representatives from the local authority. They also spoke to pupils. They looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding policies and procedures, pupil case studies, tracking for behaviour and data about academic achievement.

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

- how well the school promotes the well-being of the pupils and helps to ensure their safety
- how effectively leaders and managers are leading school improvements and ensuring better outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Woodside School provides education for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. Pupils come from across the local authority and a small proportion come from outside of the local authority area. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Just under half the pupils have autistic spectrum disorders. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils do not speak English as their first language. Over a fifth of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above average, and there are approximately three times more boys than girls. Nearly 6% of pupils are looked after by a local authority. Although the school is able to admit pupils from the age of four, at the time of the inspection there were no pupils on roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage and therefore this phase of the school was not inspected. The school was redesignated as a specialist school for physical education and personal, social and health education in July 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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**4****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the outcomes for learners, the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity.

Although there have been improvements over the last year, too many pupils still do not make adequate progress and there is significant variation across the key stages. The best progress in English and mathematics is made by pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2; pupils make the least progress during Key Stage 3. While no one group of learners underperforms across all subjects compared with others, the variation in subjects and key stages leads to inequality of opportunity for pupils. Progress in physical education is stronger than in some other subjects and this specialism also makes a good contribution to helping pupils develop healthy lifestyles.

Across the school some teaching is good. However, there is too much that is inadequate. In good lessons, pupils rise to the staff's high expectations and are actively engaged in challenging activities. In weaker lessons, assessment is not used effectively to ensure that all pupils are challenged at the right level, or have understood the work. Some staff have low expectations of pupils and in too many lessons teachers do not ensure an appropriate pace for those at different stages of learning and understanding. The leadership team is aware of the weaknesses in teaching and, with help from local authority advisers, has put in place support and training for all staff, including specific support for individual staff who are finding the new expectations most difficult to meet. As a result, there is more good teaching than a year ago. Recent changes to the curriculum are also beginning to have an impact and help improve outcomes for pupils. The schemes of work being developed are more fit for purpose than in the past, but not all subject planning provides enough support to help teachers match work to the different ability levels, nor do they provide sufficient support for staff when they need to teach outside their area of expertise. There were examples throughout the inspection where time available for learning was not maximised.

Pupils, parents and staff all agree that behaviour has improved over the last year. Progress in helping pupils to improve their behaviour has been well led by an assistant headteacher, with support from the local authority. Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils are increasingly responding well to the structured approach. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and pupils feel safe and able to talk to someone if they have concerns. Anything reported by the pupils is taken seriously and suitable action is taken. New staffing structures, including the appointment of a learning mentor, have improved the support for pupils; a number of pupils mentioned the learning mentor as someone who

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helped them if they were upset. Improved partnership working with other agencies has enabled the school to put in place some personalised support packages for pupils experiencing significant difficulties in their lives; for some of these pupils the outcomes are improving. All the relatively recent changes have helped to improve care, guidance and support, which are now satisfactory.

The school site is inadequate to meet the learning needs of the pupils. The number of different levels, separated buildings, poor ground surfaces, small hazards and hidden areas means that staff have to spend an inordinate amount of time supervising the premises and escorting pupils from building to building to ensure that they are safe. This takes the staff away from their teaching and learning roles and restricts opportunities for developing pupils' independence skills. Levels of supervision are high and suitable for the difficult premises, but there are still a few occasions where swifter action and more diligence would help to further enhance the care and support for pupils.

Monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness are increasingly robust and the strong challenge, from the new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governors, has helped to establish clear lines of accountability. Monitoring of teaching has been frequent and has helped improve some teaching techniques, including the sharing of learning objectives with pupils, but lesson observations have not always had a strong enough focus on the outcomes for pupils. Led by the new headteacher, the senior team is increasingly taking on an appropriate level of responsibility across the school, helping to develop structures and systems that are coherent with consistent expectations. These have helped to improve outcomes and provision from a low baseline and demonstrate the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and equality of opportunity by:
 - ensuring that all targets, both academic and personal, are suitably challenging and keeping expectations suitably high in all lessons
 - maximising the use of learning time throughout the day
 - using assessment in lessons more effectively so that teachers and support staff are more responsive to the levels of pupils' understanding
 - ensuring staff consistently provide written and verbal feedback that is accurate, praises real success and helps pupils to know how to improve
 - ensuring all staff are given precise feedback, following lesson observations that focus on the outcomes for pupils, so that they understand how to improve the learning opportunities for pupils.
 - Establish schemes of work that assist teachers to match work accurately to pupils' different levels of ability across all subjects and that provide the support required if teachers are teaching outside their areas of expertise.
 - Build on improvements made over the last year in day-to-day routines and supervision.
 - As a matter of urgency work with the local authority to improve the suitability of the site so that pupils' learning is not impeded.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Underachievement is not confined to one particular group, although recent school analysis demonstrates that there is greater variation between subjects and key stages for looked after children and those from a minority ethnic background. Pupils are gaining accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 at a variety of levels including GCSE. However, for too many pupils the levels and breadth of achievement do not reflect good progress from their starting point. Of the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils made inadequate progress in around one third. Pupils' skills to actively engage in learning without direct adult support are not well developed and the inappropriate pace of lessons frequently reduces opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding.

Pupils usually behave appropriately in lessons and in the good lessons are actively engaged and keen to learn. The use of rewards and sanctions is becoming more consistent and this, alongside improvement in the content of lessons, is helping to engage pupils more effectively in their learning. Analysing pupil behaviour more precisely and developing a system better suited to the needs of the pupils has helped behaviour to improve. At less formal times during the school day, behaviour is satisfactory though reliant on staff supervision and guidance. Participation is good in the range of clubs and options at lunchtime. These, alongside other opportunities throughout the school day, help to improve pupils' emotional health and well-being as well as their physical fitness. The school council has a growing role in helping developments at the school. Pupils are increasingly involved in the setting and understanding of their own targets, but this remains inconsistent across the school. A growing number of pupils are learning to travel independently and are now travelling to and from school without escorted transport. Attendance is broadly average and the group of pupils with persistent absence is reducing as a result of the support and guidance being offered.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and the use of assessment are inadequate. Lesson planning with learning objectives are in place and some teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn. In the better lessons the pace of learning is well matched to the needs of the pupils and there is flexible use of communication structures to help pupils throughout the lesson. Also, in these good lessons there are active and engaging tasks so that pupils can learn and explore concepts. However, too often work is not accurately matched to the needs of pupils and there is insufficient acknowledgement of pupils' different levels of understanding. Although pupils are taught in ability sets in English and mathematics in the secondary phase, within sets some teachers are not enabling pupils to work at different levels or pace. Assessment during lessons is not consistent and in weaker lessons teachers do not adapt their teaching or the structure of the lesson according to how well pupils understand. Feedback to pupils is not always precise enough and leaves them unclear about how to improve.

The curriculum is enhanced by a reasonable range of additional opportunities at lunchtime and after school. Recent developments, particularly in the secondary phase, have improved the curriculum for pupils. Improvements in the second specialism of the school for personal, social and health education have begun but have not yet been implemented

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sufficiently to ensure there is good provision in this area for all pupils. Schemes of work have been suitably revised, but there are limitations in staff's expertise and confidence to teach all aspects of the subject.

There have been recent improvements in the provision of care, guidance and support and these are beginning to help improve outcomes for pupils, particularly for behaviour and reducing pupils' anxiety in a range of situations. With support from the speech and language service and the local authority's autism service, staff are developing a better understanding about the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. This is helping to improve communication between staff and pupils and in turn improve the care and guidance offered.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Improvements at the school have increased in pace over the last year and particularly in the last eight months. The headteacher has a clear focus on improvement and is well supported by the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors. Priorities, including the focus on teaching and learning, have been suitably identified and improvements from a low baseline are evident. Support from the local authority and other partners has been well directed and used for improving teaching as well as care, guidance and support. Accountability has improved and the senior team are becoming more confident with their cross-school responsibilities. They are helping to develop better monitoring and evaluation systems and this in turn enables better information to support the governing body in their role in challenging and supporting the school. Monitoring information is beginning to provide better insight into the performance of different groups of pupils, but this is at an early stage and outcomes do not yet reflect equal opportunities for all pupils. Equality in participation for pupils is also hampered by the unsuitable premises. Following an audit, the school has included pupils, parents and other partners in developing a suitable action plan to promote community cohesion and implementation of the action plan has begun benefitting the community within the school.

The local authority's actions to identify weaknesses, appoint a new headteacher and strengthen governance have helped to boost the capacity for the school to improve.

Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Training for all staff and designated staff are at suitable levels. Procedures are customised to meet the range of needs of pupils at the school, but this is not always as well developed in policies. There is some good practice for safeguarding, for example personalised packages for pupils involving other professionals. Staff actions are satisfactorily helping to safeguard pupils.

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Although outcomes for pupils remain inadequate, the school has moved from a deficit budget to a balanced budget while improving pupil outcomes from a low base: this reflects satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

As this inspection was carried out with no notice, it was not possible to distribute parental questionnaires. Inspectors took the opportunity to meet with a small number of parents and carers who were dropping their children off at the school. These parents and carers were generally happy with their children's progress at the school. They did, however, state they would like more frequent information about what their children were learning and greater detail about events and trips so that they could help prepare their children for the experiences. Responses to the school's own questionnaire sent out earlier in the year also indicated that parents and carers would value greater communication from the school. Improvements to communication with parents and carers are evident; for example, the school has introduced more regular and purposeful opportunities for parents and carers to meet with teachers alongside more informative annual progress reports. The parents and carers welcomed the new format for parent's evenings, which gives suitable time to discuss their children's progress, rather than the previous format that only allowed five minutes for discussion. In both the questionnaires and discussions, parents and carers also commented that behaviour had improved over the last year. They mentioned a much calmer atmosphere and that they were no longer seeing older pupils running around the site. This view was supported by inspection evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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). 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



29 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodside School, Belvedere DA17 6DW

Thank you for welcoming us during our visit and telling us your views about the school. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you.

Your school needs significant improvement so that you can all make better progress in your learning. There have been improvements over the last year, but more could still be done.

You usually behave in a safe and cooperative manner both in lessons and at break times. The staff help you with this and we were pleased that you were able to give your opinions about the choice of rewards.

You told us that you feel safe at school and many of you commented that there is someone to help you if you have a problem.

Many of you enjoy and take advantage of the opportunities in physical education and this helps you to develop a healthy lifestyle.

We observed some good teaching in your school but also saw too many lessons where you were not given the right support to learn as much as you could. We have asked the senior leaders to make sure more lessons are like those that you enjoy best and where you learn the most. You can all help by continuing to be sensible and working hard in lessons.

We were pleased to see that there have been some recent improvements made to the subjects you learn. We have asked the school to ensure all subjects are well planned so that teachers can provide good and interesting lessons.

The school buildings and grounds are not very suitable and we have asked the headteacher and governors to work with the local authority to make the premises more suitable for your safety and learning. While waiting for improvements in the premises, we have asked staff to make sure they continue to supervise you well.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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