

The Woodroffe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113901
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	385467
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Scott HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1076
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Fortnam
Headteacher	Dr Richard Steward
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2009
School address	Uplyme Road Lyme Regis Dorset DT7 3LX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Forty four lessons were observed and meetings held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including the school's policies and procedures and progress tracking information. Two hundred and sixty three parental questionnaires were also considered.

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

- How effective is teaching at targeting individuals learning needs, particularly for the gifted and talented/more-able students
- What impact has the specialist status had on the school
- How has the leadership and management of teaching and learning improved students' experiences and developed assessment for learning

Information about the school

The Woodroffe School is an average-sized school. Most students are of white British heritage. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than found nationally, as is the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has specialist arts college status and a second specialism of mathematics and computing.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The Woodroffe School has built systematically on its previous achievements and strengthened its position as a highly effective place of learning that provides outstanding opportunities for students. The school has a highly effective, cooperative culture, with relationships between students and staff being very positive. Attainment is high and students enjoy learning. There is no room for complacency in the school. Leaders are analytical and continue to develop and refine practice in order to improve things further for students. Students recognise the hard work of staff and appreciate the wide range of diverse opportunities available. Students' behaviour is outstanding. The students are astute and appreciative, but also have a keen understanding of how things could be improved further and a willingness to articulate their thoughts to leaders in the school, including through the school council, alternative council and other informal opportunities. Sixth-form students are exceptional role models around the school. They demonstrate high levels of maturity and commitment to their studies and help to highlight the high expectations and aspirations they have. Sixth-form students can be seen regularly in many classes undertaking independent studies and this gives all students opportunities to see the high quality of work the students produce, as well as their excellent work ethic and articulate, polite, and enthusiastic manner.

There has been an extremely successful focus on developing teaching and learning and this has improved considerably since the last inspection. The leadership and management of teaching and learning has ensured that teaching has improved through a systematic development of all teaching, linking focussed monitoring processes to the continuous professional development of individual staff. School leaders continue to develop all teaching, including the good and outstanding teaching and learning. Middle leaders are engaged in the process and developing their own department practice as well as contributing across the school.

The improvements in teaching have led to further improvements in the progress students make. Progress is now outstanding as the large majority of teaching is good or outstanding. Teaching, at its best, is truly inspiring and students are able to explain how many of the teachers work with them to ensure they are successful and enjoy the experience of learning. Very occasionally, it is the students' behaviour that promotes the learning and, despite positive attitudes, students are not given enough individual challenge. The school has developed the special educational needs department and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is now accelerating rapidly. There is an increasingly systematic approach to developing provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities and its success is demonstrated increasingly in classrooms. The school identifies students who are gifted and talented, but does not yet give this enough prominence in lessons. Nevertheless, students achieve a significant proportion of A and A* grades.

The strong school community extends beyond the school gates. Staff and students are engaged in a wide range of community activities, not least of which is 'The Hub', a local youth and community centre developing opportunities for the wider community. The school extends its influence nationally also, with advisory work, and internationally with many links and visits each year developing community cohesion very effectively.

The school's governing body is dedicated and holds the school to account very well. It is willing to ask the awkward questions and prompt further development, ensuring that the senior team is always looking forward with the needs of students at the heart of decision making. The school's leadership has ensured that a process of continuous improvement is now well embedded and so has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine teaching further to ensure even greater progress by ensuring all students are challenged fully more of the time and gifted and talented students are given even greater depth and breadth to their studies.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The school has very positive links with partner primary schools and students enter the school with Key Stage 2 test results that are above average. Quickly, students develop very positive attitudes to success across the school. By the time students leave the school in the sixth form, they are well rounded young adults who are ready and willing to contribute to the wider community with a broad outlook on life.

Exam success has increased steadily and continues to rise. There is a strong trend of improving attainment in the school. The school has worked hard to improve students' performance not only in English and mathematics, but also with a wide range of subjects. The number of students achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE is well above that found nationally. Students use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively. The development of ICT is having an increasing impact on achievement. Some students are highly skilled in the use of ICT and produce some extremely high-quality professional-standard work. They are enthusiastic about and understand the value of learning. There is a partnership in the outstanding lessons that allows exceptional progress and the passion for learning and subjects is apparent. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exceptional. Students listen well and articulate their thoughts and feelings with great clarity. A number of students were able to describe a range of improvements that they felt should be made in order to develop things still further. At times, some students need further challenge in lessons to move on with much greater pace.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for very well, with increasing success academically and the good progress they make is increasing rapidly. Recent changes to the school's provision have accelerated the improvements significantly.

Students feel safe and report that the school is able to deal with issues they have quickly and effectively. They are aware of the dangers of drugs, alcohol and issues relating to sexual health. Students participate fully in physical education lessons and the wide range of other sports available. They are successful in team sports and are proud to represent the school. Students’ artistic, sporting, cultural, moral and spiritual development is outstanding. The students respond very well to the opportunities to gain knowledge of the wider world.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The senior and middle leaders in the school have a clear focus on development of teaching and learning. The effective monitoring and support ensures that teaching at all levels is improving. The high proportion of teaching that is outstanding and the high proportion that is good ensures that the experience of students is very positive overall. The best teaching demonstrates the high levels of skill of teachers and subject knowledge. The best lessons show the passion and commitment that teachers have. Students see this and respond well, appreciating the lessons that are so much fun, full of variety, but also challenging, thought provoking and which support learning in the classroom and give enough freedom to encourage learning more independently after the lesson. High-quality questioning and modelling of risk-taking by teachers builds students’ confidence to take risks in their own learning. The school leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of teaching and the areas for development. With some small refinements, even more of the teaching could be outstanding. At times, the level of challenge in lessons is not sufficient for some students, particularly the gifted and talented students. More focussed provision for more-able and gifted and talented students is needed. Occasionally, the lessons observed secured only satisfactory progress. Such lessons were few, but were characterised by too much teacher talk that slowed learning. However the behaviour in these lessons was often very positive and contributed well to the progress made.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of individuals very well. The school has been responsive to students’ requests for inclusion in the English Baccalaureate, adapting the curriculum to give students more options to ensure coverage. An appropriate focus on literacy is effective in improving achievement in Key Stage 3. It gives students a firm foundation for future learning. The school considers the whole 11-19 experience and is developing ‘pathways’ to allow all students to be successful. Students enjoy the element of choice in the Year 9 ‘Pathways’. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and students with diverse interests are catered for. The specialist status is used effectively in enhancing provision and ensuring students have access to high-quality resources. The school site is difficult to manage, but is enhanced with artworks that are of high quality and provoke thought.

The school is a caring environment and a wide range of partnerships is established to ensure the welfare of students is a high priority. A wide range of strategies and professional, well-trained staff ensure an inclusive environment. The school is very good at identifying the needs of individuals and supporting them. The school encourages students to aspire for the highest levels and is increasing further the support to achieve this. A group of students visited Oxford University recently and a small group were discussing further support from the school to sit Oxbridge entrance exams.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The Woodroffe school is highly successful and has clear ambitions to develop further. The headteacher is a highly effective leader. He and his senior team have ensured the strong development of leadership at all levels and secured continuous improvements. The positive response of parents and carers, students and staff ensures that the improvements that have taken place already are sustainable. Leaders are willing to try new things and drive improvements and strong supportive teams are active across the school as well as within subject areas. Morale is high and staff feel valued and supported in their professional development. The school is oversubscribed and parents and carers of the new Year 7 students praised the transition arrangements.

The governing body is effective at holding the school to account and is aware of how it can be even more effective at monitoring school practice. It is fully aware of the limitations of the difficult school site. Safeguarding arrangements are good. The site is managed very effectively by the school and the difficulties it presents are not used as an excuse to improve things.

The school is active in assessing the needs of its community. Opportunities to engage with other schools and organisations nationally and internationally have ensured students have a wider appreciation of diversity and culture and are well prepared for life in a multicultural world. The school is highly inclusive and embraces diversity. It promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination very effectively.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Sixth form

The dedicated and passionate leadership by the head of sixth form and the wider school team has ensured a highly effective sixth form. As a result, students are positive contributors to the school community and engaged citizens able to take their place in society with an impressive level of maturity and understanding of the wider world.

The sixth form is part of an 11-19 experience in the school and is integral to the school ethos. As such, the provision in the sixth form and the leadership of the sixth form are similar to that found in the main school. Students make outstanding progress and achievement is very strong

The curriculum is responsive and meets the needs of students. The sixth form is popular and encourages students to continue in education to remain on a formal learning ‘pathway’. Students who join the sixth form from other schools are welcomed equally and settle into school life quickly. Students are supported well through the process of university applications and are given clear guidance in moving on. Students appreciate the opportunities and the high level of care they receive in the school. Clear and effective planning and evaluation by the leadership, increasing examination success and the willingness of students to contribute to the wider school are all factors in the positive development of the sixth form.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very positive about the school, but are also very willing to communicate where they think things need improvement. They appreciate the hard work of the school staff. Some parents and carers said that they would like even more information about the progress their children are making. A number of parents and carers expressed concerns also about the school’s reports. The school is developing the reports in line with parental/carer consultation and recognises that the reports are not the way it wants them. Concern was expressed about the school bus area and the school understands the issues surrounding this area. Inspection findings show that, whilst the area is a concern, the school manages it well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Woodroffe 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 263 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1076 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	135	51	117	44	10	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	135	51	119	45	5	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	85	32	143	54	16	6	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	97	37	130	49	9	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	103	39	137	52	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	80	30	136	52	27	10	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	102	39	130	49	12	5	2	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)	100	38	128	49	6	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	98	37	127	48	7	3	5	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	102	39	124	47	12	5	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	75	29	129	49	27	10	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	112	43	126	48	11	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	130	49	117	44	5	2	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



19 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Woodroffe School, Lyme Regis DT7 3LX

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team. It was good to see you at work and to speak to you about your outstanding school.

Many of you told us how the school supports you and provides exceptional opportunities to excel. You told us also about the things that you think should be improved and we were impressed with your astute and mature comments, as well as your commitment to your own studies and to helping the wider community.

Overall, you make outstanding progress and attainment is high. Your behaviour is outstanding and sixth-form students are excellent role models in the school. You make the most of the many sporting, art and cultural opportunities. Teaching in the school is outstanding overall. The best of lessons are inspiring and teachers support you well. A small number of lessons are not as dynamic and lack pace and challenge. You are aware that this slows your progress. Teaching has improved considerably, but we have asked the school's leaders to improve the lessons that are not as effective as the best.

The school's leaders and staff work hard and are very effective in providing high-quality opportunities for your learning. That includes the local, national and international opportunities you have.

The school provides you with a high level of support and you have a very clear understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. You have a strong sense of right and wrong and understand what it means to be a good citizen in society. We were very impressed to hear how much you valued a high-quality education and about your aspirations for sixth form, university and interesting careers.

Make sure you continue to make the most of your school days and achieve the highest of standards so that you have choices for your future. Your responsibilities as role models are important to ensure the school can continue to develop further.

We wish you all well in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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