

Woodfield School

Sunstone Grove, Merstham, Redhill, RH1 3PR

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make outstanding progress in all aspects of their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is high and students' behaviour is outstanding.
- All students generally achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Many make impressive gains in developing their communication skills, including reading.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants interact very well with students and the positive relationships that develop provide a good base for learning.
- Post-16 provision is good. Students follow a curriculum that is well matched to their age and interests.
- Parents and carers confirm that students are safe and looked after extremely well. The students enjoy school and feel safe there.
- The school is well led and managed. Ambitious senior leaders and the governing body focus on driving forward school improvement, which they do successfully through routine and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work. Leaders work well with partners, such as the outreach service that supports local schools in working with pupils with learning difficulties.
- The school prepares students extremely well for moving into college or, in a few cases, employment by providing them with skills that they are able to transfer and sustain in these new situations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not analyse students' assessment data in enough depth to check how well students are performing against those of similar age and ability elsewhere, or use this information as effectively as they could when setting targets.
- Occasionally, teachers do not always make best use of their good knowledge of students to ensure resources and time are used effectively to ensure all make the best possible progress in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- In excess of seven hours was spent observing 18 lessons taught by 14 different members of staff.
- Meetings were held with two members of the governing body, a local authority officer, all of the senior leadership team, the post-16 manager and other members of staff.
- The views of 10 parents or carers were collected through Parent View, and those of staff from the questionnaires that were completed by the great majority. No parents or carers asked to meet with inspectors.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, such as student progress data, behaviour tracking, school development planning and safeguarding policies and procedures.

Inspection team

Mike Kell, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodfield is a slightly larger than average special school.
- All of the students have a statement of special educational needs for moderate learning difficulties, although many also have additional difficulties such as autism, communication needs and behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- Approximately two thirds of students are boys.
- The overwhelming majority of students have a White British heritage.
- Around a third of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is high compared with the national average.
- Students above the age of 16 years are taught in the Woodfield Post-16 Centre, which is a local authority resource for all students of this age group with moderate learning difficulties.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate further the rate of students' learning by increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that in every lesson:
 - planning pays more attention to precisely what teachers expect individuals or small groups of students to learn, and that all students have resources that match their capabilities and reading competence
 - teachers develop a better balance between the time that they spend teaching the whole class and that devoted to small group or independent work.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on students' achievement by:
 - refining the analysis of assessment data in order to better determine each student's progress compared with those of similar levels of attainment and starting points elsewhere
 - developing subject leaders' ability to use the findings of the analyses of students' performance to work with teachers in raising expectations by setting increasingly challenging targets for students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- Students enter the school working at a level that is low compared with national expectations for their age group. While standards remain low, students achieve well and make good progress from their starting points as they move through the school.
- Post-16 students' achievement is good. Students make particularly good progress in those courses that accredit their acquisition of life skills, such as competence in the kitchen, travelling independently and using signage to find their way around the community. Daily entries into their learning diaries are effective in encouraging students to reflect on their learning and how they can improve their achievement.
- There is no significant difference in the extent of progress made by different student groups, such as gender. Students who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who have additional learning difficulties perform in line with other students.
- Students make good progress in developing effective communication skills. They are reaping the benefit of small-group daily reading and phonics lessons and many show impressive progress in developing reading skills.
- Students are grouped by ability for English and mathematics lessons. This arrangement encourages rapid learning and students make good progress in consolidating and acquiring these core skills.
- Students are provided with many opportunities to work with computers and to develop key information and communication technology skills. They show good understanding of how to use different programs that support their learning and of the internet to research information.
- Key Stage 4 students do well in accredited courses, which include functional skills. They have many opportunities to practise these skills when learning in the community, such as shopping for food to cook in food technology lessons, attending college and on work experience. Consequently, they make good progress in applying class-based learning in real-life situations.
- Students' excellent development of personal skills and their good academic progress prepare them very well for leaving school. As a result, the school, including the post-16 centre, has a very good track record of securing places in college, training or occasionally employment for all leavers.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- Teaching is good overall, with some often being outstanding. It is consistently good in the post-16 centre.
- Many good features of teaching are common to all lessons:
 - the quality of relationships and adults' use of praise and encouragement to engage and enthuse students
 - well-established routines ensure that time is used efficiently when students move between classrooms and from one activity to another
 - teaching assistants make an effective contribution to supporting learning and to assisting all students' participation
 - students' behaviour is managed calmly and with minimum fuss and so learning is rarely interrupted by minor disturbances or distractions
 - staff seize every opportunity to promote students' personal development, such as listening and respecting the views of others and working with classmates towards a shared objective
 - students' speaking and listening skills are encouraged well through, for instance, question and answer sessions. Students' self-esteem grows as a result and students

- speak confidently in front of their classmates
- students' learning is checked regularly during lessons
- teachers have appropriate knowledge of the subjects that they teach.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers promote rapid learning by acknowledging students' previous achievement and reading competence when planning different learning activities for individuals or groups. This ensures that all students are challenged at a level that encourages them to tackle work independently or with minimal prompting.
- Learning is less rapid in the few lessons where staff do not pay enough regard to the range of students' attainment and reading skills. At these times, all students tend to do the same activity and use the same resources. As a result, the pace of learning slows as not all students comprehend fully the information that they are given or the task that they are required to do.
- In most lessons, staff maintain a good balance between whole-class activities and independent or small group work. However, on a few occasions they do not get the balance right and so students spend too long as a whole class when they would learn more quickly doing activities that have been tailored to meet their needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students are excellent ambassadors for the school. They are polite, friendly, courteous and respectful young people. They interact very well with adults and classmates and are very supportive of each other.
- The school is very orderly. Behaviour in classes and around school is excellent. Students are punctual, settle quickly and follow instructions and well-established routines promptly. If disruptions do occur, they are generally minor and dealt with very efficiently by staff through the application of a whole-school behaviour management procedure.
- Students' behaviour is tracked carefully and appropriate additional behaviour management strategies are put into place for students who find it particularly difficult to manage their behaviour themselves. The effectiveness of these plans is evidenced by the fact that serious incidents are rare and there have been few internal and fixed-term exclusions.
- Attendance rates are high. Students thoroughly enjoy being at school and participate enthusiastically in everything that it has to offer. Parents and carers are unanimous in their agreement that their children are happy at Woodfield.
- All staff, parents and carers also agree that children are safe in school and are looked after well. The students themselves confirm this.
- The vast majority of parents and carers agree that the school deals effectively with bullying. The students are made aware of the different ways in which bullying might occur and they are encouraged to discuss any concerns with an adult. Instances of bullying are rare and students confirm that they know how to respond should they be targeted.
- Students make excellent progress in developing awareness of how to live independently and to move around the community safely and with confidence, through activities ranging from the safe use of kitchen utensils and workshop tools to travelling independently on public transport.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders' good understanding of the school's strengths and development areas is informed by rigorous and regular self-evaluation exercises. These reflect the efficient management systems that ensure the school's smooth running.
- The outcomes of self-audit are used effectively to underpin school improvement planning. Ambitious development plans focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards, reflecting leaders' pursuit of very high quality provision and outstanding

outcomes for students.

- There is a shared commitment to school improvement as leaders benefit from having the overwhelming support of staff and the backing of the great majority of parents and carers.
 - The school has effective procedures for teachers' performance management. These have just been redrafted to take account of recent changes, but previous procedures clearly had an impact in evaluating, and then improving, teachers' practice. Teachers who do not teach consistently good lessons are supported and there is a concerted focus on establishing the link between teachers' performance and salary progression.
 - Leaders have overseen the establishment and application of a good range of policies and procedures that safeguard students. A robust procedure for vetting new staff, including the maintenance of a single central record, ensures that they are suitable for working with children. Rigorous measures such as risk assessments ensure students' safety and well-being on site and when students are learning in the community.
 - The school curriculum and that in the post-16 centre meet students' needs well. There is a good balance between the time devoted to English, mathematics and personal development programmes and other subjects, including vocational education. Routine use of a local college and work experience placements help to ease students' transfer from school to the next stage of their life.
 - School leaders contribute much to the wider community through partnerships with other organisations. In addition to its outreach service to local staff, the school works effectively with other groups and clusters of schools, such as in developing procedures to moderate the assessment of students' work.
 - Leaders track students' progress and have mechanisms for supporting those who find learning especially difficult. Therefore, they have a good understanding of each student's progress within the context of the school population. However, they do not analyse students' achievement to see how it compares with students of similar age and attainment in other settings. As they do not scrutinise this national data, there is no guarantee that teachers are setting targets for students that are challenging when compared with the national picture of students' performance and what can be achieved.
 - The school's good track record of responding to areas for development and of implementing innovative practice indicates that it has a strong capacity to maintain the momentum of change.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is fully involved in monitoring what goes on in the school and so it has first-hand insight into its day-to-day operation.
 - School leaders and the governing body participate in shared training and so there is common understanding of which areas of the school's work need to be targeted, which results in close collaboration when drafting the school development plan.
 - Members of the governing body talk knowledgeably about pupil premium and how this funding is to be used and its impact monitored.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 125481 |
| Local authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 402330 |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| 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 | 117 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 20 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Paul Selby |
| Headteacher | Sharon Lawrence |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15–16 March 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01737 642623 |
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