

Woodcote High School

Meadow Rise, Coulsdon, Croydon, CR5 2EH

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress made by some students, especially the more able, is not rapid enough, particularly in mathematics.
- Achievement is lower in mathematics than it is in English because teaching is not as good.
- The sixth form is inadequate as standards are too low.
- The proportion of good teaching is not high enough to secure consistently good progress in some lessons. Teachers do not set work that is appropriately demanding for more-able learners.
- Teachers do not provide students with sufficient opportunities to work in groups or pairs to clarify ideas or work things out for themselves.
- Teachers check books regularly, but they are not marking them in enough detail to support learning.
- Leaders and managers have implemented systems and approaches that are improving teaching and raising achievement, but many of these initiatives are recent and have not yet secured good achievement for students.
- The governing body does not have a full understanding of students' achievement. As a result, governors do not challenge the school's senior leaders and do not question the headteacher enough about the teaching in the school and the progress students make.

The school has the following strengths

- A higher than average proportion of students attain at least five GCSEs including English and mathematics and standards are improving.
- Behaviour is good. Students feel safe, and say that bullying is rare and dealt with quickly. They have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above the national average.
- There are excellent levels of care, support and monitoring for those whose circumstances may make the vulnerable or who have difficulty learning. Students feel staff know them well and do much to support them.
- A wide range of sporting activities promotes students' personal development well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 44 lessons. Of these, six were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed an assembly and tutor time for different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, and five groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of 63 responses to the online Parent View survey and the comments of one phone conversation with a parent. The lead inspector looked at questionnaires returned by 52 staff.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, scrutinised the school's data about students' achievement, examined records about behaviour and attendance, and looked at the way the governing body and leaders monitor and evaluate the school's work.

Inspection team

Robert Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Morrison	Additional Inspector
Avtar Sherri	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Duffy	Additional Inspector
Sheila Nolan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodcote High School converted to become an academy school in June 2012. When its predecessor school, Woodcote High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school works in partnership with Riddlesdown Collegiate, East Surrey College, Wates Construction, Croydon University, University Hospital Trust and The University of Creative Arts.
- The academy has specialist status in sport and has achieved the Healthy Schools award.
- The academy is bigger than the average-sized secondary school. The sixth form is smaller than average. There are more boys than girls.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average. The proportion learning English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is lower than average.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs who are supported at school action is well above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school has made use of early entry for GCSE examinations but this is under review.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers have high expectations of what students can do
 - improving teachers' use of information about students' attainment to plan lessons that meet the specific needs of all ability groups, with appropriately matched tasks and activities that enable them to make more rapid progress
 - ensuring that all students, but particularly the more able, are consistently set work that is appropriately demanding and leads to higher standards
 - involving students in their learning through using targeted questioning to check understanding
 - improving the quality and consistency of teachers' marking so that it guides students more effectively in what they need to do to improve their work.
- Increase the proportion of students making better than expected progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - setting more challenging targets for students, teachers and leaders of subjects
 - checking systematically that all students, especially the more-able learners, consistently make the required progress to meet their targets
 - engaging students regularly in conversations about their progress.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the school's leadership by:
 - making more frequent and regular checks on how well students are learning in each subject
 - giving teachers more opportunities to observe good practice in teaching

- introducing an appropriate curriculum for the teaching of mathematics and in the sixth form
 - reviewing the school's examination entry policy to ensure that the timing of entries is not detrimental to students' achievement and progress.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement is not yet good because their progress is inconsistent as they move through the academy, especially in mathematics. Teachers do not always plan work that is sufficiently demanding, particularly for the more-able students.
- Standards in the sixth form have declined. Students' progress is well below expected, especially in A-level courses. Students achieve well in BTEC courses as a result of better teaching. However, the proportion of students following these courses is small.
- When students join the academy, their attainment is broadly average. They make the progress expected of them and leave the academy with standards that are broadly similar to those found nationally.
- Standards are improving as a result of improved teaching, focused support and targeted interventions. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE examinations at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has risen to 70%. This is above the national average. Students do better in English than in mathematics because of strengths in the teaching and the teachers' higher expectations.
- The academy's early entry policy for GCSE mathematics and GCSE English language examinations limits the attainment of the more-able students. In some subjects, the proportion of more-able students gaining the highest grades is low.
- Standards in literacy are rising because students are encouraged to read more often, by themselves and to each other. Students' skills in reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology are developed sufficiently to enable almost all to be ready for the next stage in education, training or employment.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the well-planned specialised teaching they receive. The good tracking systems and effective programmes in place support both individuals and small groups of learners well. These groups perform significantly better than their peers nationally.
- The academy is using its pupil premium funding well to provide one-to-one support, smaller teaching groups, revision sessions, learning weekends and funding for visits relating to the curriculum. These activities help the majority of targeted students to achieve better than they have done in the past. Based on their average points score, the gap between the achievement of these students and students nationally is narrowing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although improving steadily, teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all students, especially the most able, make better than expected progress when compared with students nationally. This is the result of inconsistencies in the use of marking, the lack of demand in some of the work and insufficient opportunities for students to contribute their ideas in lessons.
- Teachers know their subject and their students well. Positive relationships between staff and students mean that in most lessons learners feel that teachers give them the help to succeed. Good relations and regular, positive praise for students promotes good behaviour and good attitudes towards learning.
- Teachers mark work regularly but some staff are not using the information well enough to plan learning for the different needs of the class. In too many instances, marking does not explain to students how they have made their mistakes or what they need to do to improve.
- Correct spelling is promoted through subject teaching but this is not consistent and not all teachers implement the agreed literacy policy.
- Students know their target grades but not always how to reach or exceed them. Teachers have good information on students' progress and identify those at risk of underperforming. However, this good information is not always used well enough to ensure that tasks in lessons are

matched closely to students' different levels of abilities. For example, in a Year 7 lesson in mathematics, more-able students did not make good progress because the tasks were too easy.

- Where learning is more effective, lessons are well organised to offer a range of activities that engage, motivate and challenge all students. Teachers provide students with opportunities to develop their understanding of key ideas. For example, in a Year 10 history lesson, students worked in teams to prepare their arguments and test each other's understanding through direct questioning. This good practice is not evident in all teaching and students spend too long listening to the teacher without the opportunity to ask questions or engage in the activity.
- As a result of weak teaching over time, students in the sixth form studying A-level courses make insufficient progress. However, the small number of students following the vocational courses are making faster progress because of better teaching and most are on target to secure the expected outcomes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. It is not yet outstanding because a small minority of pupils disengage in lessons when the teacher talks for too long or the pace of the lesson is not rapid enough. Students say that behaviour overall is good and this view is supported by the majority of parents who responded to the online Parent View survey.
- Students are confident and enthusiastically engage in discussions with adults and visitors to the school.
- Students socialise well and enjoy each other's company. They are aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They feel safe in the school and say that incidents of discrimination, bullying, racism or homophobic behaviours are rare. Students feel able to talk to adults freely about bullying and believe staff deal with it well when it takes place.
- Students express positive attitudes about their experiences at the academy. They value the good relationships they have with their teachers and believe they are well supported. There is a good system in place to assist the more vulnerable students, who make good progress.
- The academy has effective systems for logging students' behaviour and attendance. As a result, attendance is above average and improving. The academy has been successful in reducing considerably the number of reports relating to negative behaviour, fixed-term exclusions and the proportion of students who are persistently absent.
- Sixth form students attend regularly and are conscientious to improve. They display good attitudes towards their learning and the academy is working hard to develop their skills to work independently.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The expectations of key leaders and managers are not high enough. The academy supports the majority of students to secure the expected levels of progress. However, the numbers making better progress than this is no better than the national averages and in some areas it is not as good. This picture is particularly so for the more-able learners who are not doing as well as they should.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have a clear agenda for improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement for all students. The school improvement plan sets out clear priorities. The changes implemented so far indicate the capacity to improve further.
- The academy collects a significant amount of information about the performance of students, but teachers, including subject leaders, do not use this information effectively in the planning and teaching of lessons to accelerate students' progress.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are frequent but the evaluation of its quality does not take full account of its impact on the progress of all learners. As a result, this evaluation is sometimes too generous. Similarly, checks are not always rigorous enough to ensure that school policies, such

as the policy for literacy, are implemented consistently.

- Training for staff is well focused on the school's priorities and recognises individual staff needs. For example, all staff plan lessons to a common format that identifies the purpose of the lesson and makes reference to data about individual students.
- The early entry policy for mathematics and English has been reviewed but it is too soon to see its impact. The curriculum in the sixth form is being revised to include more vocational courses and provide clearer learning pathways from Key Stage 4 to match the needs of students more effectively.
- An extensive range of extra-curricular programmes in sport, music, drama and many other activities are well attended by students. Sporting links with the community are strong.
- Provision for students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Personal, social and health education lessons support students' personal development well. Religious education strengthens students' moral behaviour, geography and history provide good cultural experiences, and art and drama contribute well to students' cultural development.
- The academy has increased its links with parents. The school website provides up to date information and parents are encouraged to make use of the online forum and Twitter. They are frequently consulted and their views listened to. Workshops to help parents support their children's learning are well attended. The 'Parents' Think Tank' is a well-established group that enables parents and carers together to discuss matters with the academy.
- All statutory safeguarding requirements are met. The school carries out the necessary checks on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance requires improvement. The governing body works hard to ensure the academy remains on a stable financial footing. They have secured additional funding to improve the school's sporting facilities. Governors work hard with the headteacher to promote the values of 'family, dignity and ability' and ensure that learning, teaching and achievement are at the heart of its work. They have correctly identified the issues the academy must address to become a good and outstanding school. Governors are aware of how well students are doing in relation to school's nationally but they have been slow to challenge the school's declining standards in the sixth form, the lack of good progress in mathematics and the underperformance of the more-able students. They know how good teaching is and are involved in the performance management of teachers, including progression through the pay spine. The governing body ensures that pupil premium funding is allocated for the best interests of the students concerned, and governors are rightly pleased with the good progress these pupils are making. They are not well informed of how teachers are supporting students to ensure good progress in relation to the national picture. The governing body would benefit from further professional development to sharpen its skills in holding the school to account.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

Unique reference number	138187
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	406765

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
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	1208
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Cakebread
Headteacher	Mark Southworth
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8668 6464
Fax number	020 8660 9038
Email address	enquiries@woodcote.croydon.sch.uk

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