

Woodbrook Vale High School

Grasmere Road, Loughborough, LE11 2ST

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well and leave school with above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards are rising year-on-year as the teaching continues to improve.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they receive good support.
- Teaching is typically good with some that is outstanding.
- Attendance is above average because students enjoy coming to school. They feel safe, behave well and are very proud of their school.
- The range of subjects and courses offers students many memorable opportunities and experiences which help develop them into confident, responsible and motivated learners.
- The headteacher is an effective leader and, supported by an able senior team and knowledgeable governing body, has made sure that achievement continues to rise and students are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Teachers are given robust targets to improve their teaching and held fully to account for the progress that students make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently make sure that the work they set students is hard enough, or challenge them through probing questioning.
- Marking is not used consistently to inform students how to improve their work and they are not always given the time to follow up on teachers' comments.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to work on their own and assess their own performance.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Senior leaders and teachers do not always make sure that the information about how well students are doing is used regularly, to identify promptly any students in danger of falling behind, so that timely support can be given to help them catch up.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons, five of which were observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and a range of staff including middle and senior leaders.
- The inspectors took account of the 63 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own information on students' current progress, governing body minutes, records relating to attendance, behaviour and bullying and safeguarding documents. They also met with two groups of students and talked to them about their views of the school.

Inspection team

Elaine Long, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Michael Blakeley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodbrook Vale High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The school converted to become an academy in April 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Woodbrook Vale High School, was last inspected, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority, for which the school achieves additional income from the government (the pupil premium), is below average.
- The majority of students are from White British heritage and a low proportion of students come from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. An above average proportion are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- There are no floor standards because the school does not have a Year 11.
- A small number of students attend the Blaby Pupil Referral Unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that senior leaders and teachers use information about students' progress more regularly to identify students in danger of falling behind, so that they get back on track quickly.
- Give students more opportunities to apply and strengthen their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across all subjects.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that teachers:
 - provide the right amount of difficulty and challenge for all students, especially through questioning.
 - give students opportunities to work on their own and to assess their own performance
 - through marking, regularly inform students how they can improve their work and give them the time to follow up teachers' comments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with broadly average standards in English and mathematics and by the end of Year 9 they achieve standards which are above average.
- The school's results are improving year-on-year and in 2012 the school achieved its highest results ever. Student progress is good in English, mathematics and science. Students also made good progress across all other subjects except for modern foreign languages.
- Eligible students in Year 7 who are in receipt of the catch-up premium are making good progress. This is because they receive one-to-one support, small group additional support, when needed, and teachers keep detailed records of how they are doing in order to plan what they need to do next.
- In 2012, Year 9 students known to be eligible for free school meals were over two terms behind the others in English and over a year behind in mathematics. Current progress in the school shows that these gaps in attainment are closing for students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, as a result of the impact of older students listening to younger students read, teachers giving detailed feedback to students, additional teaching and small-group additional support.
- In 2012 disabled students and those who have special educational needs made good progress. Current students are also making good progress across all year groups because of closer checking on progress and well-targeted support. As a result, gaps in attainment with other students are closing rapidly.
- Current attainment and progress for all students, across all year groups, is improving. The proportion of students who are making more than expected progress is increasing very strongly in science. However, not all students have opportunities to apply their mathematical, reading and writing skills across all subjects to speed up their attainment and progress.
- Some foundation subjects, such as modern foreign languages, do not perform as well as the others. The school acts quickly to tackle these weaknesses and has put in place additional support to make sure that these differences are reduced. The school is able to show that their actions are resulting in improvements and having an impact.

The quality of teaching is good

- There are many examples of good or better teaching across most subject areas. In the best lessons, skilled choice of resources, varied learning experiences and the involvement of students actively in lessons, lead to engagement, enjoyment and achievement.
- Not all teachers consistently plan reading, writing and mathematical skills into their lessons in order to continue to raise the attainment of all students. At times, students are not given the right amount of challenge or difficulty. The use of questioning to make students think hard, solve problems and deepen their understanding and learning is not consistent in all subjects.
- The school has daily contact with the small number of students who are taught at Blaby Pupil Referral Unit and they are making good progress.

- The quality of marking varies between teachers but good examples were seen across many subjects. Effective marking involves a dialogue between teacher and student, with clear pointers for improvement and strong evidence that the students have responded to them. Where the marking is less effective, it is too descriptive and too general and does not show students how to improve their work. Students are not always given time to follow-up teachers' comments.
- Adults who support teachers are highly skilled. They help disabled students and those who have special educational needs gain the confidence and skills to work on their own. In some lessons, these students make exceptional progress when they are working in small groups.
- Teachers' expectations of students' behaviour and how hard they should work are good. In the outstanding lessons, teachers plan tasks that rapidly build on what students are already able to do and make them think hard. A science lesson on alternative energy provided an outstanding learning experience for students who found the burning experiment 'amazing!'. They were motivated and enthused and made rapid and sustained progress.
- In some lessons, teachers do not involve students fully in their learning or allow them enough time to work on their own or with one another. They are not given opportunities to assess their own or others' work. In these cases they sometimes lose interest and make limited progress.
- The majority of parents and carers feel their children are taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour around the school is good. They treat one another with respect, are polite, friendly and courteous and very proud to belong to their school.
- The school works regularly with people from the community who are elderly, disabled or who have learning difficulties and students at the school show sensitivity, care and maturity when working alongside them.
- A real strength of the school is the way in which it teaches students to adopt healthy lifestyles and to keep themselves safe. They are taught the skills they need to manage everyday risks for themselves. E-safety is a real priority for the school and students begin to learn about how to keep themselves safe online from Year 7.
- Incidents of bullying and racist comments are low and when they do happen students, parents and carers feel that they are dealt with well. The numbers of exclusions have dropped considerably and are managed fairly and in a supportive manner. The school has a very proactive approach to the management of behaviour. Any issues which arise are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Staff know their students well and there are clear systems in place for managing behaviour. The school has a referral room but its use is minimal. In most lessons, students' attitudes to learning and their relationships with staff are positive, but just occasionally this is not the case. The restlessness shown by some students does not disrupt the learning of others and is often linked to those lessons where there is a lack of challenge and pace and where the students are not engaged fully in their learning.
- Students' attendance is above average and their punctuality to school and to lessons is excellent

because they enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They visit lessons regularly to observe the quality of teaching and learning and detailed feedback is given to teachers so that they can improve. The management of teachers' performance is detailed, rigorous and effective. Their performance is tracked well and they are held accountable for the standards students achieve with clear links between the salary that teachers receive and students' good progress.
- The school has worked hard to improve its systems for tracking students' progress. However, senior leaders and teachers do not use this information regularly enough to identify any students in danger of falling behind promptly, so that the support can be given to help them catch up with their peers.
- Senior leaders undertake regular annual reviews which show that some subjects are performing less strongly than others. The school tackles these differences through providing additional support, training and guidance. The actions which the school takes clearly show impact.
- The leadership of science is especially strong and the achievement and progress of students is outstanding. Results improve year on year. Highly effective teaching, which meets the needs of individual students and which provides the right level of challenge and support, means progress is outstanding.
- There has been some instability regarding leadership in mathematics and English, due to staff absence, which the school has handled well. The achievement in these subjects is still good. The additional support given to mathematics is beginning to show impact as the progress of students is becoming more rapid and leading to higher attainment.
- The school has a wealth of external partnerships within the local community and beyond. Their contributions provide students with real opportunities to deepen their social, moral, cultural and spiritual education.
- In Years 7 and 8, subjects link together to provide students with broad learning experiences which include visits and outside speakers. However, they do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. In Year 9, students take part in community-action projects such as working in care homes, local schools and other work-related experiences. The school offers a full range of activities outside the school day and the take up is very high.
- The local authority is involved with the school regarding admissions. The school works with an external consultant who has conducted reviews of the school's work and provides support for the governing body's management of the headteacher's performance review.
- The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is good. It works rigorously to prevent any discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led and organised and has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors offer support but also robust challenge. They have been

fully involved in deciding which areas of development the school now needs to focus on. They meet regularly with the headteacher and other leaders and have a good understanding of what the information on students' performance is telling them. They are involved in setting targets to improve the performance of the headteacher and other teachers and know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance. They receive regular reports on how teaching is improving and they understand that teachers' pay will only be increased if students make good progress. They have helped put together a very detailed plan for how the pupil premium is used. They monitor the programme to see if it is being effective in raising the achievement and progress of eligible students. They make sure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding students.

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	137401
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	402753

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	502
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Gostelow
Headteacher	Graham Bett
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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