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25 April 2013

Mr Andrew Beaumont  
The Headteacher  
Woodbridge High School  
St Barnabas Road  
Woodford Green  
Essex  
IG8 7DQ

Dear Mr Beaumont

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Woodbridge High School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 April 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of the quality of leadership and management, specifically in relation to meeting the needs and well-being of students with special educational needs and/or a disability at the school.

### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior leaders, middle leaders and various staff and groups of students, including a representative group of students with special educational needs from each year group. Telephone interviews were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Chief Learning and School Improvement Officer from the local authority. Visits were made to six lessons.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

- the school is taking effective action to meet the needs and promote the well-being of students with special educational needs and/or a disability.

### **Context**

The school is much larger than most secondary schools and has an equal proportion of boys and girls. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school

meals is average. Most students are from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speaks English as an additional language is high. The proportion of students requiring extra support at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Data and the school's tracking systems show that students with special educational needs and/or a disability are very well supported in lessons and make similarly good progress to their peers. The school is using the pupil premium funding effectively to offer a range of support programmes to narrow the attainment gap in literacy and numeracy for students eligible for additional support. For example, tracking information indicates that the majority of Year 7 students who received one-to-one tuition in literacy made good progress in developing better reading and writing skills.

### **The quality of teaching**

In the lessons visited, careful use was made of learning support staff working alongside students who require additional help and guidance. Students with special educational needs worked diligently, primarily because they knew exactly what was expected of them. Support staff were well briefed and this enabled them to provide good quality support without doing the work for students.

Good questioning, clear instructions and work matched to individual needs helped students with additional learning needs keep up with the pace of learning. These students were also thriving in lessons because peer tutoring and collaborative work were used well to support learning. This was illustrated well in a Year 8 history lesson where students with additional needs drew on peer support in response to the question, 'Was General Haig an uncaring General?' Discussion and close reading contributed to students giving a well-argued interpretation of events.

Students with special educational needs who I spoke with were positive about the quality of teaching they receive. They indicated that they enjoy most lessons because teachers are 'supportive, creative and make learning fun'. These students recognise that clear explanation from their teachers and support staff reduces the struggles that they sometimes experience with their learning.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

In discussion, students with special educational needs said that they feel safe in school. Those requiring additional support are confident about the effective way that the school deals with bullying. Students acknowledge that, on the rare occasion that bullying occurs, they can turn to an adult for support, or successfully manage the situation by themselves.

My discussions with students indicate that they are positive about behaviour in lessons and around the school. Those who have experienced exclusions know and understand the code of conduct, the consequences of unacceptable behaviour and the impact on their progress. Although students receive good and continuous support when they return from exclusion, those spoken to suggested that they would wish to have even more support to manage some behaviour patterns, such as rudeness, which they struggle to control. They also pointed out that the isolation room for internal exclusion does not always work well because the work set is not always challenging and this can affect their progress.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Senior leaders have demonstrated commitment and diligence to the Equality Act 2010 by strengthening practical procedures to ensure that no student is barred from taking part in school activities because of special educational needs and/or disability. Previous policies and practices have been reassessed. These have been revised to ensure they are fit for purpose. Senior and middle leaders have clear responsibilities in relation to overseeing the well-being of students and leading on all matters linked to equal opportunities. All policies are kept under review. However, the school is not systematically evaluating the impact of initiatives on students' welfare to ensure they are fully responsive to the needs of all students.

Improvements have been made in relation to communication, the timeliness of decisions and using procedures rigorously to identify the needs of different students. For example, the school now has clear procedures for compiling risk assessments for students with special educational needs and/or a disability going on school trips. This process is enabling staff to identify students with a specific learning need or disability and determine what reasonable adjustment is needed, if necessary, for them to participate in the trip. My scrutiny of documentation showed that risks are clearly identified and decisions recorded with actions for follow up.

Good systems are in place for staff to monitor behaviour and deal with concerns quickly. A new electronic system has been installed that provides up-to-date and immediate information about students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons throughout the school day. This is underpinned by regular meetings of year coordinators and the special needs coordinators. These meetings are enabling senior and middle leaders to track students' progress, identify patterns of behaviour and put in place appropriate support. Individual students' profiles are informative and provide teachers with a clear overview of the features of different disabilities, and the strategies and resources they can use to support students. In addition, systems for monitoring students' behaviour extend to collating summative notes on attitudes and behaviour over time. The school development plan recognises that there is still more to do to reduce exclusions further, especially for students requiring additional support. The school is currently piloting LEAP, a new project that is designed to respond to students with behavioural and emotional difficulties. It is, however, too early to comment on the impact of the project.

Effective partnership work with local schools and external agencies provides a range of resources and services for students with additional needs. For example, arrangements are in place for students to benefit from counselling and support from the school psychologists.

The school provides a good range of enrichment activities. There is good emphasis on ensuring that they are inclusive and meet the needs of all students, including those with particular needs. However, the school does not have a clear system for monitoring and evaluating levels of participation by different groups.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided regular advice, support and guidance to the school, particularly in relation to meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and/or a disability. Regular keeping-in-touch meetings are helping to focus leaders and managers to sustain improvement and keep the revised policies and procedures under review.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that initiatives to promote equality of opportunity, improve behaviour and raise standards are evaluated by using equality impact assessments as identified in the disability equality statement to identify strengths and weaknesses, and next steps.
- Ensure that exclusions are reduced further, particularly for students with special educational needs.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Redbridge and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**