

Woodlands Meed

Chanctonbury Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9EY

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good
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

- Senior leaders very successfully managed the establishment of a new school over two sites 18 months ago, and its subsequent development.
- Leaders very quickly established a school culture of high expectation of learning for all. The school provides a good standard of education for pupils with a very diverse range of learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils who are entitled to pupil premium perform as well as others.
- Pupils with the most severe and complex needs in specialist classes make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is typically good and so pupils generally make good progress in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes are very positive and pupils behave well. Their attendance is high.
- Pupils are very well looked after and cared for.
- The provision for post-16 pupils is good and prepares them well for leaving school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children have a good start to their education.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders have been particularly effective in establishing good quality teaching overall.
- Strong links with partner schools and colleges contribute much to enriching pupils' learning.
- The vast majority of staff are very complimentary about the school and support what leaders are trying to achieve.
- Every parent and carer who completed Parent View stated that their child is happy at the school, and the vast majority would recommend it to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is typically outstanding.
- The school has not been open long enough to confirm pupils' progress and achievement over time as the pupils move through a key stage.
- The impact of staff with management responsibilities on raising standards is variable.
- Governance is still developing. Not enough governors have first-hand knowledge of the school and of pupils' attainment and achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited both sites and observed pupils in all key stages being taught. Twenty five lessons were observed, each taught by a different teacher, and 11 of them were observed jointly with a member of the school’s leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the leadership and management teams, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and an officer from the local authority.
- Parents’ and carers’ opinions of the school were gathered through the online questionnaire (Parent View) that 27 of them completed and from the results of the school’s own recent survey.
- The views of staff were collected from 81 completed questionnaires.
- Inspectors collected pupils’ views of the school from the many conversations that were held with individuals and small groups throughout the two days.
- A wide variety of documentation was examined, including pupil assessment data, attendance records, self-evaluation procedures, safeguarding documentation and development planning.

Inspection team

Mike Kell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodlands Meed is a much larger than average special school. It was established as a new foundation school in September 2012 following the amalgamation of two community special schools. This is the first time that it has been inspected.
- The school has the role of providing for all pupils with a statement of special educational needs in Mid Sussex that require a special school place. Pupils with a very diverse range of special educational needs and disabilities attend.
- Woodlands Meed is located on two sites a short distance apart. The school site is a new building and is situated alongside Oakmeeds Community College and London Meed Primary School. It caters for the age range from the Early Years Foundation Stage up to the end of Year 9, and it is also the base for two specialist classes for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The college site provides for Key Stage 4 and post-16 pupils. The college was developed from one of the two schools that was amalgamated and, subsequently, extensively refurbished. It is located alongside a maintained primary school.
- Just over two thirds of the pupils are boys. There are seven children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 36 post-16 pupils.
- The school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from families in the armed services) for just under a third of pupils, which is above the national average.
- Pupils represent a very wide ethnic background, with White British being the predominant group. A very small number of pupils have English as an additional language.
- Many post-16 and Key Stage 4 pupils receive part of their education in other settings, such as Oathall Community College Farm, Central Sussex College and Plumpton College.
- The school is the administrative base and lead partner of the Meeds SEND Alliance, which is a partnership of local schools and other agencies that work with children with special educational needs and disabilities, their families and schools in the Burgess Hill area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that staff:
 - consistently use a range of communication strategies to support and assess pupils' learning in all subjects
 - use marking more effectively to give pupils better information about what they have done and how they can improve
 - spread the good practice for teaching reading, including phonics, that occurs in some classes into all areas of the school site.
- Make leadership and management more effective by:
 - ensuring that all staff with management responsibilities fulfil their roles fully and so make a greater contribution to raising standards
 - improving the impact of governance through ensuring that all governors have good first-hand insight into the school's and college's work and question more closely the information about pupils' achievement that they receive.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Having only been open 18 months, there is not enough data to judge pupils' achievement in Woodlands Meed over an extended period. Pupils have made good progress in the short time that the school has been open.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons. They grow in knowledge about the subjects that they study and develop new skills in problem solving and in using and applying those that they have previously learnt in new situations.
- Pupils achieve well in developing numeracy skills, and in the vast majority of cases they make similarly good progress in developing their ability to communicate effectively. This includes the development of reading skills in most cases, although systems for teaching the early stages of recognising letters and being able to make their sounds (phonics) are not securely embedded across the school.
- Pupils with the most complex needs, such as severe autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties, in specialist classes, make outstanding progress.
- There are no noticeable differences in the attainment of pupils who receive targeted funding, such as those who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who benefit from the Year 7 catch-up programme, and their classmates. Nor is there any significant variation in the proportions that make expected or better progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are equally successful, and the very few pupils who have English as an additional language do as well as others.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because they are assessed meticulously when they enter the school and individual learning programmes are put into place. They become more confident communicators and much more aware of the world around them as they increasingly tolerate and interact with adults and classmates.
- Key Stage 4 and post-16 pupils' good progress is evident in the impressive range of accreditations that these pupils acquire and in their preparedness for leaving school. All leavers in 2013 went into employment, education or training. Pupils' learning in external settings is monitored closely and these additional providers contribute much to pupils' good achievement.
- The particular learning needs of the most able pupils are managed well. By grouping the oldest pupils according to ability in English and mathematics, much learning takes place through exchanges in lessons. Furthermore, pupils who show a particular talent in a subject, such as art, benefit greatly from attending classes in partner mainstream schools.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is at least typically good across both sites. Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers provide them with activities that challenge them to build on what they have learned previously.
- The quality of relationships and interactions that take place are significant features of the good teaching. As a result, staff provide demanding work, secure in the knowledge that pupils will respond positively to the challenge.
- Disturbances in lessons are extremely rare. They are generally managed very efficiently on the very few occasions when they do occur, with minimum disruption to others.
- There is a high number of skilled teaching assistants, and teachers manage their class teams well. Consequently, well-briefed teaching assistants play an important role in supporting pupils' learning and the good progress pupils make.
- Consistent high quality teaching in the college prepares pupils well for accredited examinations and subsequently for leaving school. Teachers' selection of interesting activities and their use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies enthuse and challenge pupils.
- Teaching is especially strong in the specialist classes that have pupils with the most severe and

complex needs. Class teams' knowledge of these groups' personal needs and their insight into how they learn most effectively ensure that lessons are very productive. Staff are very skilled at helping pupils to become more accustomed to change through very well-established routines.

- Teaching in all subjects generally incorporates a strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills. This is very successful most of the time as staff use a variety of techniques to achieve this. However, on occasion, chances are missed because the approaches used do not match all pupils' preferred choice. For instance, worksheets and other resources that are intended to aid pupils' understanding or check their learning rely too much on text, without symbols as support. Therefore, pupils cannot show their learning other than with significant adult support.
- Many pupils read on their own with understanding because the text is entirely appropriate, whilst others do so with some support. On a few occasions, however, pupils with less secure reading skills are not so successful because the text is far too advanced for them, or because although the text is at the right level, staff do not guide them effectively with phonics when they stumble.
- Questions are used well to monitor pupils' ongoing learning, but the effectiveness of other procedures for checking pupils' progress is more variable. Pupils' work is marked, but teachers do not consistently provide written feedback that raises questions in pupils' minds or explains how work could be improved.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and so attendance is high. They look smart and display positive attitudes throughout the day. They invariably tackle new challenges eagerly.
- Behaviour is good in classes and elsewhere, such as the playground and dining room. Displays around the school provide a constant reminder to pupils of what is expected of them. There have been no permanent exclusions, but a small number of pupils have been subject to short periods of fixed-term exclusion.
- Some pupils have very challenging behaviour associated with the nature of their learning difficulties. Staff defuse potentially difficult situations well using a variety of techniques and, as a result, physical interventions are rarely required. Senior leaders track pupils' behaviour closely and the governing body receives regular reports.
- Pupils follow instructions and they are considerate of others and of the building. There is no litter, displays are undamaged and the school is free of graffiti.
- Pupils make extremely good progress in many aspects of their personal development. Many show impressive gains in confidence and self-esteem such that by the time they are ready to leave school they are impressive young people who are optimistic about the future.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very secure. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures is in place, and staff training in aspects such as child protection maintains staff's vigilance.
- Parents and carers, as well as staff, confirm that there is no bullying or instances of intimidation, and they are similarly unanimous in their opinion that pupils are safe. Pupils are taught about the potential risks associated with internet use.
- The school is a very caring community. Pupils are treated respectfully and those with personal hygiene needs are managed with dignity.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher oversaw the amalgamation of two very different schools very effectively. Very careful planning ensured that two groups of pupils with totally different sorts of special educational needs, and two groups of staff with quite different experiences and skills, came together harmoniously.

- Since then, senior leaders have successfully established a school with a single, shared vision. They achieved this through a combination of very clear short-term goals and long-term ambitions, supported by very efficient systems for monitoring and measuring ongoing progress. As a result, leaders have established good quality teaching and have detailed knowledge of how well pupils are learning.
- Staff with leadership and management responsibilities support the headteacher very well, but not all managers are equally effective in contributing to raising standards.
- By ensuring a smooth transition in 2012, leaders and managers at all levels ensured that pupils' learning was largely undisturbed. As a result, those who were taking examinations in 2013 did so very successfully and achieved well.
- Pupils of all ages study a good range of subjects that is suitable to their age, interests and needs. For instance, Key Stage 4 and post-16 pupils have a work-related element to their curriculum that includes work experience for most.
- Transport difficulties make it difficult to run many after-school activities that allow pupils to pursue their interests or to develop new ones. Leaders have overcome this by timetabling the equivalent of clubs and activities, ranging from boccia to drawing skills, at the end of two days each week.
- The impact of targeted funding is reviewed regularly. Pupil premium payments have contributed not only to raising pupils' achievement but also on enriching their experiences, such as residential school trips. Year 7 catch-up funding has funded phonics and mathematics booster programmes, but its impact has not yet been evaluated fully. Primary school physical education and sport money has raised the profile of sport in the school and encouraged greater participation.
- Although still in its infancy, the Meeds SEND Alliance's work already confirms the school's influence in the wider community and its value to the local authority.
- The local authority worked very closely with school leaders and the interim governing body leading up to the school's opening, and it has continued to support its subsequent development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body did a good job in supporting the school in its early development. Good use of the local authority's training programme gave governors a sound understanding of their responsibilities in a foundation school, despite some of them being inexperienced governors and others being experienced but only in community schools.
 - While governors have a good awareness of their role in challenging and holding school leaders to account, the systems for doing so are not entirely embedded. Not all governors make regular visits into the school in order to gain first-hand experience of its day-to-day working.
 - The governing body monitors pupils' behaviour and performance through very regular headteacher reports, but members do not scrutinise this deeply enough, secure in their understanding of features such as P levels.
 - The governing body knows how targeted funds are spent and their impact, and it has good oversight of how effectively different teachers perform. This improves governors' appreciation of the outcomes of teachers' appraisal and their awareness of how teachers' pay is linked to their performance.
 - The governing body works closely with leaders to ensure that all safeguarding measures are in place and checked for their effectiveness.

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	136114
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	428895

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Clifton
Headteacher	Gill Perry
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01444 244133
Fax number	None
Email address	office@woodlandsmeed.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

