

Woodlands Community College

Minstead Avenue, Southampton, SO18 5FW

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Students of all abilities do not reach the standards they are capable of in mathematics and science.
- Students' achievement is too variable between subjects and between groups of students. Boys make less progress than girls.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Some teachers do not plan activities at the right level of difficulty for their students.
- The stronger features of teaching present in the school are not sufficiently shared across subject departments.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and achievement have improved enough to be good.
- Students do not always show positive attitudes to their learning. Sometimes poor behaviour disturbs lessons.
- Strategies introduced by school leaders have not yet led to sustained improvements in achievement.
- Some teachers with subject responsibilities do not use the information that they have to secure rapid improvement.
- Governors do not show a deep enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement is improving. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is increasing.
- The headteacher, well supported by other staff, has introduced initiatives that are leading to better teaching.
- Teachers' marking helps students to improve their work.
- Students' attendance is improving. Incidents of poor behaviour are becoming less frequent.
- Students feel safe in school and there is very little bullying.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 24 lessons, of which four were jointly observed with members of the school's leadership team. They made several shorter visits to observe literacy activities. They also visited an assembly and tutor group periods.
- Inspectors looked at students' work in their lessons and carried out a detailed scrutiny of their written work.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of students to discuss their views of the school and talked with students around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- A variety of school documentation was examined, including records of current students' progress, self-evaluation and improvement plans, behaviour and attendance logs, minutes of governors' meetings and records relating to safeguarding and the management of staff performance.
- Inspectors took account of the questionnaires completed by 53 members of staff, 52 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter from a parent. A meeting was held with one parent when requested.

Inspection team

Sean Thornton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Margaret Faull

Additional Inspector

Catherine Robinson-Slater

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is much below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- Over half of the students on roll are known to be eligible for the additional funding called the pupil premium. This funding is provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- Five students attend alternative provision for part of the week.
- About twenty students are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding, which is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of students who join or leave the school during the year is above average.
- There have been significant changes in the senior leadership of the school since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to good by ensuring that:
 - the features of good teaching present in the school that promote effective learning are implemented fully by all teachers
 - work set for students is always at the right level of difficulty.
- Improve standards of achievement by:
 - ensuring that all groups of students make more rapid progress in mathematics and science
 - reducing the differences in progress between groups of students and, in particular, increasing the rate of progress being made by boys.
- Improve staff consistency in managing low-level classroom disruption.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that middle leaders in all areas use the information they have on the quality of teaching and students' achievement to secure rapid improvements in their areas.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' attainment and progress are not consistent. In particular, boys make less progress than girls. There is too much variation between the progress that students make in different subjects. Students of all abilities do not make as much progress as they should in mathematics and science.
- School leaders have taken strong actions to raise standards. These are showing increasing effect, so that students lower down the school are making more rapid progress. These actions, however, have not yet impacted fully for students at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Students join the school with attainment that is significantly below the national average. The proportion of students that gain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has increased steadily and is now almost equal to the national average.
- Recent improvements have been made to the school's tracking systems so that the progress of all groups of students is monitored closely. This is helping the school to plan extra support where needed.
- The school monitors closely the progress made by disabled students and those with special educational needs. As a result of the support provided, the achievement of these students is equal to that of their peers and their rate of progress is increasing.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium were about one grade lower in both English and mathematics than their peers in 2013. The gaps in progress and attainment are now reducing. Strategies in Key Stage 3 are particularly effective in enhancing the progress of these students.
- Additional funding for those students in Years 7 and 8 who need help to catch up with their peers in English and mathematics is spent well to provide small teaching groups and one-to-one support. As a result, these students make good progress in their literacy and numeracy, and some make very rapid progress in reading.
- Previously some students were entered early for their GCSE examination in mathematics and there is evidence that this has lowered achievement. This practice has been discontinued and records indicate that this will lead to rising standards.
- The most able students are entered for a GCSE examination in humanities at the end of Year 9 and results are good. The overall achievement of these students is improving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. It is not consistently good enough across the school to ensure that students make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- Some teachers do not always plan activities at the right level of difficulty for their students. In these lessons expectations of how much students can learn are not high enough. As a result, students, including the most able, are not challenged to think for themselves.
- Where learning is more effective, teachers provide a variety of engaging activities for their students and ensure that no time is wasted. They check students' understanding frequently and use questioning skilfully to make sure that students are making good progress. This good practice is not yet shared across the school.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly, providing comments on the quality and guidance on how to improve further. Students reported that they find this marking helpful and try to respond to it.
- The school has identified that many students join Year 7 with weak literacy skills and that this hinders their progress. Several strategies are now in place to support literacy. Strategies to develop numeracy skills across the curriculum have now also been introduced as part of the school's drive to raise standards of mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and provide good support to classroom teachers and groups

of identified students. They make a strong contribution to the progress of some students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of students' requires improvement. Students' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive in different subjects and with different teachers and there is some low level disruption.
- Students report that their learning is sometimes disturbed by poor behaviour and that some teachers do not follow the school's agreed behaviour policy effectively. These teachers do not consistently reinforce expectations of good behaviour throughout lessons.
- Behaviour around the school at break times and change of lessons is mostly orderly and good natured. Most students show courtesy to adults and offer advice to visitors. Students show respect for their school buildings and there is very little litter.
- The school offers good support to students who have behavioural difficulties. The number of fixed-term exclusions is decreasing rapidly from its previous high values.
- Attendance has been low for the past three years, but the school's current records show that this has now increased considerably and is moving towards the national average. Levels of persistent absence have been above average during this time but they are now decreasing because of more effective follow-up procedures.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say that they have confidence in the school's systems to deal with any bullying or incidents of a racist nature and that such incidents are rare. Staff are vigilant in logging any incidents of poor behaviour and analyse them regularly.
- Students have a good understanding of e-safety, including how to avoid unsafe websites, because of the emphasis the school places on this issue.
- One third of the respondents to Parent View did not agree that behaviour is managed well, but almost all agreed that their children were happy at school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching is not yet good and, consequently, students are not making good progress.
- Middle leaders are conscientious about gathering information about the quality of teaching and students' work in their areas. However, not all have been able to use this information to secure improvements quickly.
- The headteacher is now well supported by other staff with leadership roles. Together, they have made significant improvements in the overall leadership and management of the school. Many of these improvements, however, have not yet led to a big enough improvement in students' outcomes.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and is broadly accurate. School improvement plans are detailed and show clear priorities for further improvements in achievement and teaching.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are frequent and the results are used to plan appropriate training. However, the quality of teaching is still too variable across the school.
- The main priority of the headteacher and the governing body is that every student has the opportunity to do as well as possible. The school is committed to ensuring equal opportunities and no form of discrimination is tolerated.
- Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers' performance and the application of the Teachers' Standards are linked closely to the targets for improving students' progress. Salary progression occurs only when merited by sustained good performance.
- The curriculum is well organised. At Key Stage 3 there is a strong emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy, particularly for the less-able students. The most able are provided with challenging courses. Students in Years 10 and 11 are able to follow a wide range of courses that

are flexible and responsive. Students have many opportunities to engage in a wide variety of activities outside the school day, including several sports.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, both through the curriculum and the general life of the school. There are many opportunities for reflection and for celebrating achievements, together with effective assemblies which deal with sensitive issues. The school provides many enrichment activities in music, dance and drama which are very popular with students and contribute to their cultural development.
- The school's arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet all current requirements. All staff have received child protection training and checks of potential new staff are thorough.
- The local authority has provided the school with some additional finances but has not contributed enough to monitoring the school's standards and supporting school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to the school and to promoting high-quality care for students in an inclusive atmosphere. They have effective committee systems for undertaking their statutory responsibilities and ensure that all appropriate policies are in place. Governors manage the school's finances well and make sure that all safeguarding responsibilities are met. However, minutes of meetings show that although governors are provided with extensive information they do not ask challenging questions about achievement and teaching. For example, they have not challenged the school strongly enough on the different rates of progress being made in subjects and by student groups. Governors are aware of how the pupil premium funding has been spent, but are not fully aware of its impact. They check that pay progression is linked to teachers' performance and are aware of the types of targets set for teachers. Governors have been involved in tackling teachers' underperformance.

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	116465
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	431051

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	591
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Blatchford
Headteacher	Joanna Anslow
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 November 2009
Telephone number	02380 463303
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