

Woodfield School

Malmes Croft, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 8RL

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the school. She has established an exceptional team of leaders, where everyone's role is clear.
- Senior leaders and governors have ensured continuous improvement since the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are outstanding
- Governors have a thorough and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. The governing body provides leaders with appropriate support to maintain high standards in the school.
- Pupils make excellent progress from very low starting points because teaching is outstanding.
- Leaders have accurate, validated methods for recording the small steps of achievement that pupils make. Teachers plan activities which promote maximum progress.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children and their families are fully supported on entry to the school. Children immediately start to develop their communication skills.
- Leaders and the parent support ambassadors work effectively with parents and other providers to ensure that transitions into, during and when leaving school are smooth.
- Students make outstanding progress in the sixth form. Students are well prepared for moving to college or into employment.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school where everyone works together to achieve the motto of, 'Sharing, caring, achieving together.'
- Leaders, teachers, therapists and support staff work seamlessly together to promote the welfare of individual pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. Pupils experience a broad range of cultural activities embedded in a highly effective, rich, engaging curriculum.
- Significant importance is placed on removing barriers to learning so that all pupils can make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Parents speak affectionately about the devotion and care that is provided to their children, to ensure that they flourish and achieve.
- Woodfield School is a happy place where pupils feel safe, secure, valued and cared for.
- Leaders are working with other schools to develop better ways to measure pupils' personal and social development, and recognises that this can be improved.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to work with other schools to share best practice in evaluating pupils' personal and social development, so that these essential outcomes are more sharply measured.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The school is led by an exceptional and inspiring headteacher who has professional curiosity and a determination to do the very best for every pupil. She and her senior team, together with all other staff, show an uncompromising focus on the quality of provision and demonstrate high expectations for all.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest. Leaders know the school extremely well and are clear about their responsibilities. Action plans are speedily implemented and monitored. The tracking of progress is thorough and informs learning activities and intervention programmes.
- Performance management systems are used efficiently to challenge staff and to hold them to account for the performance of pupils. The school's professional development programme is precisely tailored to improve the skills of individual teachers.
- The curriculum, focused on 'destination-led' learning, ensures that where a pupil progresses to after Woodfield is a priority. It is exceptionally well planned. There is a strong focus on preparation for adulthood from the earliest years. Personalised learning programmes include academic, personal and social development targets for each pupil. The mobile home on the school site provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to develop their independent living skills. Pupils make outstanding progress in this regard.
- The sensory programmes enrich the curriculum. For example, gardening acts as a stimulus for all pupils. As a result, they are able to make small but significant steps in their physical development. The work they do in the hydrotherapy pool and physical education sessions enriches the curriculum, enabling freedom of movement and an increased self-awareness.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are taught in an environment where they are guided by excellent adult role models. As a result, pupils learn how to act suitably in social situations. Displays around the school support pupils' cultural learning effectively.
- Many opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about different cultures through assemblies and religious education focus weeks. These rich experiences allow pupils to begin to develop an understanding of life in modern Britain. For example, when learning about Judaism, pupils prepare Jewish food and learn about different Jewish festivals. Pupils dress up in the traditional costume of the religion they are studying.
- Special educational needs funding for all pupils is well spent. It ensures that they get the best teaching and individualised support to do well.
- The school utilises its pupil premium funding carefully to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as they should. As a result, their progress is outstanding. Barriers to learning are removed because these pupils receive outstanding, individually tailored teaching.
- The physical education and sport grant is also used very effectively. For example, the enhancement of playground and playtime resources encourages social development. The most able children are given the opportunity to compete in tournaments with other

schools. The least active children are supported to take part in suitably appropriate sports activities.

- The Year 7 catch-up funding provides effective help to those pupils eligible to have the support and resources they need to make the very best possible progress in their learning.
- Staff, governors and parents work extremely closely together. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Those spoken to said that the school provides a safe environment that shows devotion and deeply cares about every child. The parent support ambassadors are instrumental in engaging parents with the school.
- The school works in partnership with local primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and local colleges to share good practice. Established links with the University of Hertfordshire allow for participation in training and development projects, and the support of student teachers.
- The school holds many awards, including specialist status for cognition and learning, accreditation from the National Autistic Society (2016), the International Schools Award (2014–2017), the EYFS Hertfordshire Quality Award standard, the ICT mark recognised by the National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (Naace) and the Careers Education and Guidance quality award.
- Leaders work well with other schools to ensure that they check their own monitoring of pupils' personal and social development. Further opportunities to do this will improve this aspect of leaders' work further.

Governance

- The governing body makes an outstanding contribution to the school's work and shares the headteacher's passion, vision and commitment to do everything possible to meet the needs of pupils.
- The chair of governors takes her responsibility very seriously and is meticulous in carrying out her duties. The chair contributes considerably to the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management. She works tirelessly to support the school and is passionate about wanting the very best for the pupils and staff.
- Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise to support leaders in the school. They have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They routinely check that actions identified in the school's improvement plans are making a difference to pupils' achievement and well-being. They hold leaders to account rigorously for the quality of education and care they provide for pupils.
- Governors ensure that the additional funding for primary sport, Year 7 catch-up, pupil premium and special educational needs is targeted and used effectively. They demonstrate they have an excellent understanding of the impact that this extra funding has had.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- A strong culture of safeguarding permeates through the school. The nature of the school means that those who attend are vulnerable in a variety of ways. Staff, irrespective of their role, know pupils extremely well. They remain vigilant and keep a watchful eye on each pupil.
- The record of checks on staff is appropriate and is routinely quality assured by the local authority. Leaders and governors fully understand how to recruit safely so that all staff are carefully vetted prior to starting employment.
- Policy and procedures to protect pupils are up to date and shared with parents on the school's website. Links with outside agencies, particularly the local authority safeguarding team, are well established.
- There are well-organised systems in place to record any concerns that staff have about pupils. Leaders ensure that these are followed through to a suitable conclusion.
- The work of the designated safeguarding officer is precise, careful and tenacious. Records are well kept and are stored securely. Pupils' files are maintained well so that they are accurate records of the most vulnerable pupils' experiences.
- Staff ensure that all potential risks for visits and activities are thoroughly assessed. High levels of staff supervision and engagement with pupils in their activities ensure that pupils are safe. As a result, pupils stay safe.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. They know that staff in school will help and support them if they have any worries or concerns. The school site is safe and secure. Appropriate checks are made on visitors.
- All medicines are stored safely. Regular checks are made of the specialist facilities such as the hydrotherapy pool.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked hard to ensure that the quality of teaching is outstanding across the school. Teachers have extremely high expectations and are highly skilled in checking how well pupils have learned.
- Pupils, from their well below average starting points, make outstanding progress in communication, reading, writing and mathematics across the key stages.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are exceptionally skilled at supporting every pupil to overcome the individual challenges they face when learning.
- Teachers plan lively, interesting lessons that capture pupils' interest and imagination. As a result, pupils exhibit outstanding attitudes to learning. Pupils' confidence and attitude to learning makes a huge contribution to the outstanding progress they make at Woodfield School.
- Staff do all they can to promote the development of communication skills. Signing, symbols and pictures are modelled consistently across the school. The methods used take account of pupils' different abilities and levels of understanding.
- Technical aids are used appropriately to help pupils communicate. This allows them to be as independent as possible when providing an opinion and making choices about what they wish to do.

- Adults question pupils sensitively and skilfully to assess their understanding. They challenge pupils to refine and develop their ideas using different methods of communication according to their needs.
- Teaching assistants provide excellent support for pupils with additional complex needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder. They break tasks down into smaller steps and focus on developing pupils' understanding of technical words to clarify any misunderstandings.
- Assessment information is now used very effectively across the school. The current systems draw on comprehensive information about every pupil and track the progress they make from established starting points. A wide range of progress measures help to assess personal, social and independence skills, as well as achievement in subjects.
- Ongoing assessments monitor and assess pupils' progress. This provides staff with accurate information to plan pupils' work. This results in pupils successfully building on prior learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills.
- Progress reports are provided for parents each year. This ensures that parents are well informed about their child's progress.
- The outdoor learning spaces include an orchard, a sensory garden, a music area and outdoor play areas that are designed to enhance learning and meet specific pupil needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are happy and thrive in the nurturing environment provided for them. Pupils respect each other's different faiths and backgrounds, and do not see disability as a reason for prejudiced behaviour.
- All staff are fully committed to the school's aim of preparing pupils for adulthood. Pupils follow curriculum learning pathways designed to acquire independent living skills; some to gain employment through supported internship and others to attend college.
- Pupils are given daily opportunities to develop their independence and self-esteem. For example, they shop together to buy groceries, cook lunch and learn to travel independently by bus.
- Older pupils are responsible for running the coffee shop. They collect the lunch orders from visitors, use the cash register and calculate the profits made. Older pupils run a successful enterprise project.
- Pupils are keen to participate in a wide range of opportunities such as trips to the theatre, art galleries, sporting events, workshops, live music and other culturally rich activities as appropriate.
- At break and lunchtimes, pupils' personal and social skills are reinforced. For example, pupils sit in small groups and make choices from a menu about the drink and food they want to eat in the cafe.

- Parents spoke of how much they appreciate the effort that staff go to when pupils enter or leave the school. They are grateful for the support that they are given. As a result, pupils settle easily into the school and they are supported successfully when transferring to a different setting.
- Movement around the site is safe and sensible because of high levels of sensitive and appropriate supervision. Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe, both in and out of school, because of the very clear guidance they receive. For example, pupils accurately told the inspection team how they reduce risk when on the internet.
- The family ambassadors provide advice, offer support at professional meetings and provide a listening ear to parents. This ensures that full support is provided to both the pupil and the family. Parents' views are sought regularly through parent workshops, coffee mornings and the school website, making relevant information more accessible to parents.
- Pupils are keen to get off the buses when they arrive because they enjoy coming to school. They are reassured by the established routines and familiar faces of smiling staff who provide a warm welcome.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is as a result of consistent routines, high expectations and respect for pupils' dignity.
- The school is a calm and orderly place. There is excellent behaviour in all lessons because pupils respect the adults who work with them.
- Pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes is also excellent. Pupils interact well with staff, and are very responsive to established routines. Pupils play with each other in an inclusive and caring manner.
- 'Donkey therapy' teaches 'gentle hands'. It has a calming influence on pupils and instils care and respect towards animals, fellow peers and adults.
- The school has highly effective systems in place for managing pupils' behaviour. Staff are very skilled at knowing when to intervene to swiftly re-establish pupils' positive behaviours. As a consequence, instances of low-level disruption are rare.
- Each pupil has an individual behaviour plan to help them to manage their own behaviour. Staff follow these plans thoroughly. If an incident occurs, staff reflect on what can be learned in order to keep everyone safe.
- Without exception, parents, staff and governors believe that behaviour is outstanding throughout the school.
- Pupils attend well. Those pupils who attend less frequently have a medical reason for this. Fixed-term exclusions are exceptionally rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- All pupils arrive at the school with substantial complex barriers to learning. Pupils' starting points are regularly well below those expected.

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The aims and outcomes of these plans create accurate personal targets which address pupils' individual needs and enable them to make very strong progress across the key stages.
- Leaders are swift to identify the additional needs of pupils. They are able to modify the curriculum so that barriers to learning are removed. In lessons, pupils understand what they are learning about and are clear about what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils, from their well below average starting points, make outstanding progress in communication, reading, writing and mathematics across the key stages.
- The progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding is similar to others in the school. Disadvantaged pupils flourish in this setting. They make rapid progress from their starting points, sometimes within weeks of starting at the school, because of the successful individualised support they receive.
- Leaders carefully measure the progress and outcomes in academic subjects. They can clearly demonstrate pupils' strong progress in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science; personal, social, health and economic education, and computing.
- Progress in English and mathematics for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, is strong because the teaching of these subjects is outstanding. Leaders precisely track pupils' progress and take rapid action to overcome any underachievement.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in their social communication skills. Pupils confidently share their views and opinions with other pupils and staff throughout the school day. This helps them to progress confidently and learn these skills effectively.
- Leaders capture the development of pupils' independence, self-esteem and confidence over time. This information convincingly demonstrates that pupils make outstanding progress across the full curriculum.
- Lamerwood Outdoor Learning is used by pupils once a week for outdoor education, to develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a natural environment with trees. Pupils make outstanding progress there.
- Leaders use information on pupil progress successfully to support effective transition between each of the key stages. Subsequently, no learning time is lost.
- The achievement of older pupils is supported well by work experience placements, supported internships and the weekly courses they follow at West Herts College. The school is highly successful in developing pupils' readiness for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership in the early years is exceptionally strong.
- Teachers are attentive in ensuring that children settle quickly and get the support that they need. They visit the child's home to understand their needs. Parents are highly complimentary about the level of care that their children receive.
- The early years team is passionate about improving outcomes for children. They are

particularly proud of the exceptionally strong progress that all children make from their below-typical starting points.

- Children are accurately assessed when they arrive at school and are provided with stimulating activities which promote their next steps in learning.
- Progress in all the areas of learning is outstanding because adults have such detailed knowledge of each child, due to excellent liaison with parents. The 'daily diary' is a very detailed and informative record for staff and parents of each child's progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants build trusting relationships with children. This helps children to feel safe and secure. In lessons, children behave exceptionally well. They quickly learn to sit still and listen carefully to the teacher.
- Children learn to play, to share, take turns, and focus their concentration for an increased length of time. Consequently, they become ready to learn and to be more independent.
- Staff constantly talk with children and engage them in the activities provided. As a result, children behave exceptionally well and are eager to learn.
- Children are very safe in the early years area. There is excellent supervision, including at break and lunchtimes. Children feel safe because they have absolute trust in the adults who work with them. Safeguarding and welfare arrangements are effective.
- The learning space in the early years classroom is welcoming and very carefully planned to ensure that children liaise with each other. Activities are linked to the well-structured and exciting curriculum. The outside area is adequate to provide multisensory experiences.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The school's post-16 area is led exceptionally well. It enables students to continue their learning and gain qualifications. Importantly, it offers a safe, recognisable environment for them to continue to develop the skills needed for adulthood.
- This year, all students achieved an Entry Level Diploma in Independent Living by the end of Year 14. This represents a significant achievement, given their very low starting points. The courses available are personalised to individual student needs. This award serves as a foundation for further learning or employment.
- The 'Curriculum for Adulthood' embraces the skills students that need as they prepare for life after Woodfield School. It focuses on six curriculum areas, which are: me and my functional skills; me and my relationships; me and my sport and leisure; me and my future; me and my community; and me and my independent life.
- Students' excellent attitudes to learning enable them to make outstanding progress academically, personally and socially. Expectations are high. Students develop the skills needed for everyday living by spending time in the local community visiting shops. They are taught how to interact with the public when purchasing goods. Travel training develops students' confidence to travel independently.
- In a sixth-form young enterprise group lesson, appropriately planned activities ensured that the work was suited closely to students' needs. Inspectors saw students

enthusiastically making wooden reindeer and Christmas cards to sell. Other students calculated the financial implications, developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

- The young enterprise company helps students to develop skills for working life. The pop-up cafés and coffee shop provide opportunities for students to develop their literacy, numeracy, communication and independence skills. Over time, these procedures become routine, enabling students to participate in everyday life.
- Students are taught how to look after the community as part of their outdoor learning. Some students access work experience in the community with support from school staff. Others benefit from supported internships. The work-related learning team supports students in all year groups to acquire the skills needed to function in the workplace.
- Careers guidance is excellent. Leaders host an opportunities evening in partnership with local colleges, providers and services. This provides students and their parents with an insight into local providers who can support them in the next stage of their education, training and care.
- Students learn about college and have visits as they prepare for their next steps. A programme of transition is planned with the college for students in their last year at school, based on their individual needs. Leaders work hard to make sure that parents have confidence in their child's future placement. School staff visit identified placements to ensure that there is a smooth transition and provide useful advice.

School details

Unique reference number	117682
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10019210

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Worden
Headteacher	Gill Waceba
Telephone number	01442 253476
Website	www.woodfield.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@woodfield.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Woodfield School provides for pupils who have severe learning difficulties. Many have additional complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorders, epilepsy or physical and sensory impairments. Many also need regular medical intervention.
- The school is located on the edge of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. Pupils come from the Dacorum and Watford areas, although some pupils travel from further away.

- There are 90 pupils on roll, aged 3 to 19 years.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- There are twice as many boys as there are girls and very few are in local authority care.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background. Pupils also come from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- The school uses off-site alternative provision at West Herts College Dacorum campus for small groups of key stage 4 and post-16 students. Lamerwood Outdoor Learning Centre is used by pupils once a week.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on both days of the inspection. They also spoke to pupils and examined the work in folders. Lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders and governors. Parents were spoken to informally.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses recorded on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 17 written responses, and considered 33 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to governance, the school's self-evaluation, school improvement planning, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2018