

Inspection of Woodhouse College

Inspection dates: 24 to 27 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Woodhouse College is a 16–19 academy operating from a single site in the London Borough of Barnet. Students join the college from over 180 different secondary schools across north London.

From January 2021, following academisation, Woodhouse College became part of Frontier Learning Trust. This new trust was established as a collaboration between Woodhouse College and Imperial College London.

There are 1,457 students studying on education programmes for young people. All students are on GCE A-level courses, across a wide range of subjects. The largest areas of provision are mathematics and the sciences. Seven students are in receipt of high-needs funding.

The college currently works with Barnet Education Arts Trust as a subcontractor for its small music A-level provision.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students flourish in the welcoming and exceptionally inclusive community. Students celebrate diversity through the numerous events and societies, such as the recent cultural dress fashion show organised by the African-Caribbean Society with the student council. Consequently, students embrace the freedom they have to express themselves in a diverse community.

Students become more independent in their studies because staff have exceedingly high expectations of them. As a result, students have outstanding levels of motivation and are very ambitious to succeed.

Students are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps after college and many attend specialist academy programmes in areas such as medicine and Oxbridge preparation. The vast majority of students go on to university, and many obtain places at universities with very demanding entry criteria.

Students' attendance at college is consistently excellent because they feel privileged to attend high-quality sessions led by teachers who are passionate about their subjects. Teachers are experts in their field and craft lessons to challenge students to think beyond what is expected at A level.

Students receive highly effective support for their mental health. This includes a popular well-being dog who is used to help students to stay calm. There are also workshops to help students manage exam stress. Students are able to book appointments with counsellors if they need more specialist support. Consequently, this support helps to improve students' well-being and helps them to manage stressful situations, such as examinations.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

The new principal and chief executive officer, along with the senior team, have ensured that high standards are maintained. Students receive an outstanding quality of education at the college. The vast majority of students, including those with high needs, complete their qualifications successfully and most gain high grades at A level.

Governors, who are highly skilled in their roles, have a detailed and very accurate understanding of what the college does well, as well as the few areas and subjects that need to be further improved. Consequently, they are able to challenge leaders successfully to make ongoing improvements to the quality of the provision. For example, governors ask very effective questions during meetings, such as querying any achievement gaps between different groups of students.

Curriculum leaders provide very clear leadership at subject level. They have a sharp focus on ensuring that the curriculum is fit for purpose and meets the needs of their very ambitious students. Leaders also ensure that staff work together as highly

effective teams, both within and between subjects. There is a positive ethos that means that effective practice is continuously shared, and staff are open to trying out new ways of teaching based on research in pedagogical practice. Consequently, teachers continue to maintain high standards of teaching.

Leaders have an exceptionally clear rationale for the curriculum. The purpose of the curriculum is to enable students to progress to further studies academically. To this end, leaders design the curriculum so that it helps students, including those with high needs, to gain advanced knowledge and skills to enable them to progress to university. For example, in English literature, teachers are careful to select texts that cover the literary genres that students need to know about to study English at university. They teach students the analytical skills they need to understand the themes of the texts within their historical context, and to draw comparisons with contemporary society. For example, students relate Shakespeare's curiosity about the nature of leadership to current affairs.

Teachers use highly effective strategies to ensure that students understand what they have been taught. Teachers use skilful questioning and effective recap activities that refer to content from earlier in the course. For example, in sociology, they use 'throwback Thursday' quizzes, where learners receive higher points as an incentive for remembering something in the longer term. As a result, the vast majority of students can recount what they remember from earlier on in the year, or from the previous year.

Teachers prepare students exceptionally well to engage in academic discussion. As a result, students develop their understanding, and strengthen their wider skills of communication and analysis. For example, in history, students are able to compare the characteristics of 19th-century Russian serfdom with conditions in medieval England.

Teachers use assessment particularly effectively to check students' progress and understanding. They use assessments well to help identify what students have understood, and where they need to carry out further revision to reduce gaps in their knowledge. Students also get helpful advice about how to improve their work. Students produce work of a consistently excellent standard.

Leaders and managers have put in place comprehensive and robust arrangements to improve teaching and learning. Leaders and managers evaluate the performance of teachers and give feedback to them on what they do well, and what they can do to improve. This links well with an excellent range of professional development opportunities. These are well informed by current thinking in education, such as developing students' growth mindset and improving their reflective learning skills. Consequently, staff continuously develop and refine their teaching and assessment skills.

Teachers and staff promote the highest expectations of students. As a result, students' behaviour is exemplary, and they take their studies very seriously. Students have an outstanding work ethic both in lessons and when completing self-directed

study. Together, staff and students create an environment in which hard work is celebrated.

Staff provide excellent support to students with high needs, such as through the use of adaptive technologies and the provision of one-to-one sessions with learning support assistants. As a result, students are able to fully access the ambitious A-level curriculum. The majority of these highly skilled and knowledgeable young people progress to positive next steps after college.

Leaders ensure that students are able to access an outstanding range of high-quality extracurricular activities. These include sports, creative hobbies, an economics and investment club and gardening. Consequently, students develop their wider talents and interests and socialise well together.

Leaders and teachers ensure that students have the opportunity to attend an extensive variety of highly relevant excursions and trips to broaden their understanding of topics. As a result, teachers make excellent use of these trips to help students understand the wider context of the topics they study in class.

Teachers ensure that students have an excellent understanding of British values and how these relate to them. Students learn about democracy and can recognise the importance of democratic systems in running in the college, such as the function of the student council in giving them a say in their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) receive appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training and have a particularly strong understanding of specific risks in the local area. They take effective steps to minimise these risks to students.

DSLs and leaders have developed an excellent safeguarding curriculum. Topics such as sexual health, unhealthy relationships, consent and knife crime are taught in an age-appropriate way. These are presented through activities and assemblies that enable students to explore dilemmas and give carefully considered responses. As a result, students remember what they have been taught, and know whom to turn to if they need to report something that is worrying them.

DSLs take prompt and effective actions to support students who need it. This includes making prompt referrals to external agencies such as the police and local authority, where required.

Provider details

Unique reference number	148421
Address	Woodhouse Road London N12 9EY
Contact number	0208 445 1210
Website	www.woodhouse.ac.uk
Principal	Sugra Alibhai
Provider type	16–19 academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Barnet Education Arts Trust

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report of the predecessor college. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

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