

Inspection of Woodford County High School

High Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 9LA

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils flourish, both personally and in their academic studies. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful to all. They have high aspirations for themselves. Leaders ensure that all staff commit to helping pupils fulfil those aspirations. Pupils achieve well and secure places at renowned universities.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils meet these expectations. They take responsibility for their actions and behave very well. Moreover, they show kindness and consideration towards each other. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, leaders deal with it effectively. Pupils are safe here.

Teachers share enthusiasm for their subjects with pupils. Pupils work hard and learn in depth. They develop the skills they need to become independent learners. Leaders provide many trips to enrich the curriculum, including to the bay of Naples and to the First World War battlefields.

Pupils have access to an extensive and varied range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Music and drama play a significant role in the life of the school. Sixth form students lead clubs and societies. There is a true spirit of community at the school.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious, academic curriculum. It is well sequenced and builds up pupils' knowledge and skills in increasing depth and complexity. Leaders have developed curriculum content to reflect the diversity of pupils. Examples of this include through the choice of texts in English and through the study of events, such as the partition of India in history. At GCSE, pupils study all three aspects of science (biology, physics and chemistry) in depth as well as a language, and history or geography. There is also the option to study Latin and/or classical studies. Leaders ensure that pupils study a broad range of subjects up to Year 11. At A level, many students study the sciences and mathematics. A high proportion go on to study medicine, dentistry, or veterinary science at university.

Teachers use their deep subject knowledge well. They present and explain new content clearly and question pupils skilfully. They also promote discussion and debate. This deepens and extends pupils' learning. Pupils are confident and articulate in contributing their opinions and ideas in lessons. In subjects such as science and design and technology pupils do a lot of practical work. Teachers use this work to secure pupils' understanding and to develop subject-specific skills. Indeed, teachers help pupils to think and work like subject specialists. This helps pupils to develop a love for learning. Teachers give pupils regular and specific feedback on their work. Pupils use this to good effect. They produce work of a very high quality.

Leaders identify pupils' needs well. They provide teachers with information and training to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils learn without disruption. They ask questions to check their understanding and show very positive attitudes to their learning. Leaders work well with those pupils who have identified needs, including with regard to their attendance. However, sometimes leaders are too slow to address pupils' attendance when it begins to fall below expectations.

Leaders prioritise reading. They encourage pupils to read for pleasure. Younger pupils have library lessons and pupils read in tutor time. Leaders ensure that teachers develop pupils' literacy and mathematical skills from Year 7 to the sixth form.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive personal development programme. Pupils from Year 7 to the sixth form learn about relationships in an age-appropriate way. They also learn about equality and diversity. They celebrate difference through events such as religious festivals. Sixth-form students are leading work on a school equality charter. Pupils take on leadership roles, support the local community and undertake charity work. They receive appropriate careers information, education and guidance from Year 7 onwards. In the sixth form, students have an extensive university guidance programme. This includes university visits, practice interviews and talks from former students. Leaders prepare students well for higher education, apprenticeships and life beyond school.

Leaders are providing a high-quality education for pupils. They have a mission to inspire pupils to achieve great things. Central to this is a focus on high-quality professional development for staff. Governors work in collaboration with school leaders. They ensure that provision adapts and develops over time to meet pupils' needs. Leaders listen to pupils, parents and staff and use this information to plan the school's continued development. Staff enjoy working here. They feel well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They provide training and regular updates for staff. This ensures that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding issues. Staff are alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and other signs of potential concern. They report any concerns about pupils as a matter of urgency.

Leaders work well with external agencies to provide the help pupils need. They have also developed in-school services to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils learn about safeguarding risks in lessons, assemblies and in talks from external agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' actions to address the poor attendance of a small minority of pupils are insufficiently systematic and robust. Therefore, these pupils miss out on important parts of their education. Leaders should ensure that swift and effective action is taken, at the first signs of concern, to improve pupils' attendance.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	102852
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10203914
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1235
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patsy Whiteside
Headteacher	Jo Pomeroy
Website	http://www.woodford.redbridge.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	25 March 2009 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, other school leaders, and members of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, design and technology, and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with subject leaders for art and design, modern foreign languages, and mathematics. They visited lessons in these subjects. They also visited sixth-form lessons in economics and Latin.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to additional groups of pupils in relation to behaviour and attitudes, and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the 523 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 107 responses to the staff survey and 281 responses to the online survey for parents, Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Guy Forbat	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Hayley Follett	Ofsted Inspector
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