



Woodford County High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102852
LEA Redbridge LEA
Inspection number 276782
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ian Hartland HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	High Road
School category	Community		Woodford Green
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		IG8 9LA
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	02085040611
Number on roll	850	Fax number	02085061880
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr W Brock
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Miss H Cleland

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 276782
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

With 850 students on roll this all girls grammar school is smaller than most secondary schools but the sixth form with 247 students is larger than average. Attainment on entry into the school and subsequently into Years 10 and 12 is well above average. A small number of students receive free school meals. There are a few students with learning difficulties. Many students speak English as an additional language. There is a high number of students from minority ethnic groups. The school is housed in a grade 2 listed building which results in high maintenance costs and imposes constraints on its use.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Woodford County High judges itself to be a good school. Inspectors believe it to be an outstanding school. It is strong in all areas with many exemplary features. The excellent leadership of the headteacher supported by a highly effective leadership team, middle management and governing body have enabled the school to achieve excellent improvement since the last inspection. Standards are high at all levels and all groups of students make exceptionally good progress. Test and examination results have improved. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and planned improvements in physical education (PE) facilities are due for completion in September 2006. In response to teaching, which is often outstanding, students are very responsive to learning, behave and concentrate extremely well and work hard consistently. Care, guidance and support are exemplary and students feel safe and valued. A particularly outstanding feature is how well students are known by staff which enables them to make exceptional progress in their personal and social development. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched with a wide range of additional activities, but a whole school approach to promoting literacy across the curriculum is not in place. There are too few opportunities for the routine use of ICT in all curriculum subjects. The school is constantly striving to do even better and its evaluation is rigorous. It is very efficient in deploying resources and provides excellent value for money. The school is very well placed to move forward and build on its undoubted success.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form's effectiveness is outstanding. Students' results from advanced courses, are significantly higher than national averages and are, overall, above what might be reasonably expected of them from their prior attainment at GCSE. Teaching and learning are outstanding and students are encouraged to do independent research and read widely. Students have very mature attitudes to learning and show a high level of responsibility for younger girls, leading most clubs and societies and being responsible for the school council. All students are treated as individuals and their needs are recognised and met. Although, financially, the funding for the sixth form is subsidised from the main school budget, it offers outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

* Develop a whole school approach to promote literacy across the curriculum* Extend opportunities for the routine use of ICT in all curriculum subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Inspection evidence and an analysis of students' performance indicates that standards and achievement overall are outstanding. Students start in Year 7 with standards that are well above average. They maintain these standards in English, mathematics and science in national tests at the end of Year 9, with particularly high attainment in science. This very high standard is maintained in external examinations at the end of Year 11. The proportion of students gaining five or more higher grades (A*-C) in GCSE was well above the national average in 2004 and continued to improve in 2005. The school rightly judges results in the sixth form to be outstanding. Students start advanced courses with attainment which is well above average in comparison with the national expectations. Examination results in 2004 were very high and improved further in 2005. Students' progress and achievement are good, given their prior attainment in GCSE examinations. Students throughout the school make extremely good progress in response to often outstanding teaching and because so many are very highly motivated to achieve well. The small number of students with learning difficulties also achieve very well and most exceed the targets set for them. The school works tirelessly to ensure that all groups of students achieve as well as they can. No groups are underachieving, including minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. The school met its own challenging targets in 2004 and 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The provision for students' personal development and well-being is outstanding. By the time they leave, the students are confident, likeable, mature young women. The vast majority enjoy school and are appreciative of all the opportunities provided for them. They join in a very wide range of activities with enthusiasm and commitment, particularly the sixth formers who lead many clubs. Behaviour is excellent, both in class and around the school. Students indicate that bullying is not a problem and they know what to do about it. Attendance is well above average and unauthorised absence is low. Students' moral, social, and cultural development is very good because of the range of opportunities provided and their response to these. Spiritual development is good, but opportunities are sometimes missed to give students time to reflect on spiritual matters. Students clearly learn the importance of staying safe, having a healthy lifestyle and taking responsibility as members of society. Sixth formers play an outstanding role in the running of the school and students of all ages have positions of responsibility, but the amount of consultation over significant issues is relatively limited. The few students with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding, including in the sixth form where students are encouraged to do independent research. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and very high expectations. They use a variety of strategies matched to the different ways in which students learn and make effective use of the available resources. In particular, teachers are effectively developing their own ICT skills through a well planned training programme. However, the size of some rooms puts constraints on teaching methods. Teachers have established excellent working relationships, know their students very well and are attentive to the needs of each individual. They are very skilful at assessing learning and communicating feedback to their students. As a result, students know exactly how to improve, achieve highly and enjoy learning. Students learning English as an additional language achieve as highly as their peers. Students with learning difficulties are very well supported and achieve as highly as they can. The needs of Year 7 students are very well identified and met when they join the school. The systems in use to track the progress made by individual students are effective and the school is actively looking into standardising the process. Teachers consult students regularly to further improve the quality of teaching and learning. They use their assessment and lesson evaluations very effectively to inform future planning. Schemes of work are reviewed annually and plans adjusted to match the needs of all students more closely.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is intentionally academic and meets the needs of all students very effectively across all key stages. It is broad and well balanced, with a wide range of options for Year 10 and 11. The curriculum in the sixth form is very broad and has been further enhanced recently, in response to students' requests, to include a greater choice of subjects. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and now meets statutory requirements. Staff are deployed judiciously to provide the highest expertise where it is most needed. There are inconsistencies, however, in the development of literacy across the curriculum. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. Careers education is very good and prepares students very well for the next stage of their education. Curriculum enrichment is exemplary and provides excellent opportunities for personal and cultural development. There is a wide range of well attended clubs and lunch time activities. The school manages the constraints imposed by a listed building very well and there are strategic plans in place to upgrade the present facilities. For instance, it makes effective use of a local leisure centre pending the construction of a sports hall. The school is equipped with only two small computer suites owing to the lack of space but students have extended access to computers outside lesson time.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school places very great emphasis on encouraging students' all round development and throughout the school they receive very high quality care, guidance and support. The school judged provision to be good; the inspection evidence is that it is outstanding. As individuals, students are very well known to staff and this enables the students to respond to challenges and achieve high standards all round. The guidance on the next stages of education or employment is very good and in most respects, students are very well prepared to move on. However problems of access to ICT limit the extent to which they can routinely use computers, as they might in the workplace. Procedures for health and safety meet statutory requirements and are regularly reviewed. Child protection arrangements are up to date and known to staff, who are also very aware of other issues which may be of significance to teenage girls. These issues are very effectively dealt with through PSHE and the tutorial programme. The provision for students with particular needs enables them to achieve at an equivalent level to other students. Parents are highly supportive of their children and the school and are kept well-informed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

At the last inspection leadership and management overall were judged to be very good. Inspection evidence indicates that it is outstanding. The headteacher's exceptional leadership has created a school that provides a very high quality education for all its students. The headteacher and senior team continually seek to improve all aspects of school life and have a strong sense of direction with clear priorities for improvement. They have set, and continue to maintain, very high aspirations for all students. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity that results in a community where students are very well known by their teachers and where every student really does matter. The leadership team has taken effective action to address the areas for improvement in the last report. Leaders and managers take great care to ensure that students are offered every opportunity to maximise their progress. Leadership and management in the sixth form are outstanding. Middle managers are held to account for the work in their subjects through a rigorous process of monitoring and review which requires departments to comprehensively evaluate their own provision and successes. Leaders systemically seek information about how well things are going. Leaders make extremely good use of information, for example in analysing test and examination results to bring about further improvements. The school has a strong partnership with parents. The vast majority of responses to a questionnaire were very positive about the school and what it offers. The school understands very well its strengths and where it needs to improve. Self-evaluation is rigorous and takes into account the views of staff, parents and students and acts upon them. Inspectors believe the school to be better than its own modest evaluation suggests. The governing body are very well informed and have ensured the school meets its legal responsibilities. They are supportive, challenge the headteacher and staff, and play a very effective

role in the work of the school. The school is very well staffed. Resources are used well and effectively managed. Although the accommodation brings with it a number of constraints and financial burdens, the school utilizes all space to the full and very soundly manages its finances. All students benefit from the strong links with external agencies. The school has maintained its very high standards over a number of years and possesses both a strong desire and an extremely good capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team who visited your school on 2nd and 3rd November to let you know what we think about the school. Thank you for your help in talking to us about the work you do and what you think about the school. You are right to be proud of your school and we found it to be an outstanding school with very many strengths.

As a result of high quality teaching and your hard work very high standards are achieved in tests and examinations. You make the most of the many opportunities and extra activities the school offers. Your behaviour is excellent, you get on very well together and you show very positive attitudes. We found that relationships between staff and students are very good indeed and the staff know you very well which enables them to guide and support you well. You are very well cared for and feel safe at school. We think that the headteacher provides outstanding leadership and, along with other school leaders, has a clear sense of direction and knows the ways to make the school even better. The vast majority of your parents are very happy with the school and all it provides.

We do think that there are some things that the school could do better. Firstly, a whole school approach to promoting literacy across the curriculum is needed to enable you to improve your skills in all subjects. Secondly, we would like to see opportunities for the routine use of ICT in all curriculum subjects to be extended.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hartland, Lead Inspector