



# The Weald School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 126068  
**LEA** West Sussex  
**Inspection number** 282054  
**Inspection dates** 1 February 2006 to 2 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Peter Green HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Upper Station Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Billingshurst
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		West Sussex RH14 9RY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 787200
<b>Number on roll</b>	1445	<b>Fax number</b>	01403 787276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Dr G Parr
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P May

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 1 February 2006 - 2 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282054
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The Weald School is a large, rural, mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11–18 in West Sussex. It has specialist status in technology, since 1998, and sport, which takes effect from September 2006. It has 1514 pupils on roll, including 271 in the sixth form, having increased from 1447 pupils in 2004. Fifty per cent of pupils travel by bus to school from outlying areas. The percentage of pupils eligible for free schools meals is below average as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is slightly higher than average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school with many outstanding features; it provides good value for money. The leaders and managers know the school very well and the self-evaluation is accurate and clearly states both the strengths and where the school needs to improve. Senior management has addressed appropriately and thoroughly the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, while maintaining the strengths. The headteacher gives very clear direction and involves the whole school in effective planning to meet the needs of all pupils. The support for pupils is outstanding with a full range of measures in place to help pupils of all abilities and talents. Careers guidance is a particular strength across the school; the school works most effectively with many partner organisations to ensure that pupils can develop their abilities and contribute to the community.

The pupils are extremely well behaved and feel they are in a safe environment. The school promotes healthy lifestyles in the curriculum and in the services it provides; however, the range of courses in the sixth form does not meet the needs of all learners. There is a wide range of sporting and other extra curricular activities and trips, of which pupils and parents speak highly. Pupils make good progress between the key stages and results in GCSEs and A levels are also very good. Teaching and learning are good and the school is developing strategies to share best practice, including developing further the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Monitoring and review of the pupils' performance are excellent.

Parents are most supportive of the school. Governors are very committed to the school and their contribution is excellent. They work well with the headteacher and help to set a caring and pupil-centred ethos. The school's capacity to improve is very good, based on the proven track record of making improvements. The school has the potential to improve even further.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form is large and makes a very significant contribution to the school. There is a good range of courses, mainly at advanced level, which meets the needs of almost all students. Management has an accurate picture of sixth form provision and has made plans to provide a broader curriculum. Entry criteria for the sixth form are flexible. There is good support and teaching, and students make good progress; standards are above average. Students value the very strong support they receive and the wide range of opportunities outside the classroom. Retention into Year 13 is very high. The sixth form gives good value for money.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop the sixth form curriculum to better meet the needs of all learners.
- Extend its teaching and learning strategies, including the sharing of best practice
- Embed the

strategies to improve pupil progress further, particularly for the higher achieving pupils and students • Develop further the use of ICT in the curriculum.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement and standards are good. Pupils make good progress at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the sixth form. Inspectors consider that there is strong potential for them to be outstanding. Pupils enter the school with attainment a little above the national average. At the end of Years 9 and 11, standards are significantly above national averages. Targets are robust and for the last three years most have been achieved: in 2005 two were narrowly missed and two others exceeded. In Key Stage 3, progress is good, particularly in English and science. There has been a significant improvement in English in recent years. Good progress is maintained in Key Stage 4 so that the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE subjects at grades A\*– C is well above average. In 2005, the average grade across the best eight subjects was significantly higher than average. Progress in English was outstanding. It was also excellent for boys with average prior attainment. In 2005, achievement was slightly below average for a small group of lower attaining pupils and those with significant learning difficulties. The school recognised this deficiency and made changes for these groups of pupils this academic year and is very optimistic that they will do much better. The school analyses its results carefully and knows what it needs to do to raise them to outstanding. Overall, achievement, standards and value-added in the sixth form are good.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The contribution made by the school to pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and enter into all aspects of school life extremely enthusiastically. Their attendance is very good and the number of exclusions is well below average. Their behaviour in lessons is often outstanding. Although the pupil population is large, movement around the school is very orderly. Behaviour in the playground is exemplary. Any bullying is very effectively dealt with and pupils' feelings about bullying are monitored through surveys implemented by the school council. Through this body, pupils within each year group are encouraged to contribute to and influence the life and work of the school.

A well taught personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme encourages pupils to think carefully about their own safety, health and well-being. The recent improvements to food in the canteen, and the acquisition of sports specialist status reflect this. The way pupils contribute to the wider community is outstanding. They run projects, such as the Weald Radio broadcasts, participate in archaeological digs and charity events, and undertake immense hours of voluntary work in the community, in addition to involvement in exchange visits and sponsoring projects in less economically developed countries.

Workplace skills are developed exceptionally well through many different avenues, such as a well structured work experience programme and excellent careers education and events.

Pupils' moral and social development is a key element of school life, with opportunities provided to discuss moral issues in many different subjects. The emphasis on cultural and spiritual development is very strong, although there is still no daily act of collective worship for all because of accommodation constraints. Opportunities are given in class and assemblies to reflect on tolerance, and to develop the pupils' understanding of other cultures and matters such as 'goodness'. The whole ethos of the school contributes to spiritual development.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers take considerable care to plan work to motivate pupils. Pupils say that lessons are interesting because they have opportunities to work in varied ways, for example in groups and in practical activities. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils are a very strong feature of teaching and learning. Teachers encourage and praise pupils to good effect and help them to gain confidence. In some lessons observed, pupils were actively encouraged to evaluate their own and each other's work. Pupils also say that teachers are always willing to help them with their work outside of school hours. Additional courses and extension activities are provided to develop pupils designated as gifted and talented. Pupils with special educational needs receive excellent help, with very good use made of support staff. These pupils were observed making good progress in lessons. Teachers use ICT and other resources effectively. However, in some lessons, the level of the pupils' understanding was not checked consistently; in question and answer sessions, not all pupils were actively involved and insufficient time was given at the end of lessons to check and reflect on learning. Pupils are set individual targets in all subjects, their progress is rigorously monitored and they receive helpful feedback in their written work. Assessment is used very effectively to provide accurate data on the current and future performance of individual pupils, groups of pupils and overall school performance.

Strengths and areas for improvement in teaching are clearly identified and built into an effective staff development programme, which also includes teaching assistants and support staff.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school offers a good curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 11 which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and has been developed to ensure that the needs of all pupils are adequately met. Changes

have been made to the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, allowing for increased flexibility in the range of subjects offered. Higher attaining pupils are provided with good opportunities to follow accelerated courses, for example in statistics and critical thinking. Work related and vocational options are now offered, including a partnership arrangement with a local college, and the school makes excellent provision for vulnerable pupils and those with special needs. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop and use their ICT and literacy skills across the curriculum. An advanced skills teacher in careers coordinates an excellent careers education and work experience programme. In the sixth form, however, there is a limited offer of vocational subjects; a point acknowledged and being addressed by the school. An excellent range of activities is provided, including additional support, in all subjects outside school hours; these are very well attended.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

There are outstanding levels of care, guidance and support and these have an extremely positive impact on learning. Pupils feel very confident that any problems they have will be addressed, and they readily name those in school they could talk to, such as tutors, heads of year and the pastoral officer. Child protection and health and safety procedures are very strong. Pupils needing support and guidance to cope with behavioural or personal issues have their needs met extremely well through a 'traffic lights' monitoring system. In-house expertise and outside agencies are promptly used. Pupils also provide support and guidance for each other through a mentoring/peer support scheme whereby Year 10 pupils give one-to-one support to specific Year 8 pupils. Academic support is extremely well organised and effective. Pupils and parents are made aware of the pupils' targets and of what the pupils need to do to improve. Targets are regularly reviewed. Very high levels of assistance are in place at key times, such as when making decisions about GCSE subjects, further education or careers. Pupils in Year 10 spoke very positively about the quality of guidance they had received to help them make appropriate and informed subject choices. Sixth form students also commented positively on the quality and impartiality of advice they received before entering the sixth form.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a clear vision and sense of purpose throughout the school. Leaders and managers know the school exceptionally well through systematic monitoring that provides an accurate view. Strategic planning and response to change are very effective. Standards are high and have risen steadily since the last inspection.

The headteacher conveys a strong sense of commitment to the personal development of all members of the school community. He is well supported by the governors and

assisted by a committed and effective senior management team. Governors have a strong strategic overview of the school. The drive to achieve excellence is enthusiastically supported by hardworking staff. The school is infused with a purposeful atmosphere that encourages innovation and a continuous striving to develop the best educational provision for its pupils. Planning has already started on how to take the school further forward.

The management of the sixth form is good. The relatively open access policy is balanced by very good support and an inclusive ethos. Achievement is high. The school's own judgement that it needs to broaden its curriculum and improve tracking in the sixth form is accurate and fair.

Specialist technology status has enabled the school to extend the curriculum and engage successfully with the wider community. It supports its primary schools very well by providing master classes for gifted and talented pupils, and also some professional development for primary teachers. The outreach into the community is a strong and successful feature. Relationships with local businesses have opened up opportunities for enhancing the careers and vocational curriculum.

The views of parents and pupils are genuinely sought and acted upon. For example, the school is acting upon how lessons are covered when teachers are absent. Parents hold the school in high regard. The Weald School has successfully established itself as a highly respected institution within the community it serves.



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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
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	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
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	insufficient evidence

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 that visited your school on 1 and 2 February 2006. We were very pleased to meet and talk to so many of you from all year groups and visit your careers convention and options evening. Your contributions helped to give us a good understanding of your school. We enjoyed our visit and we appreciated the friendly and courteous welcome you gave us. We agree with the view of many of you that The Weald is a very good school.

Our report on the school will soon be published and it will be available in full for you, your parents and others to read. We want to give you a brief outline of the main points made in the report and we hope this will be helpful to you and your teachers.

What we liked most about your school:

- the calm and pleasant atmosphere in lessons and around the school
- your enjoyment of good lessons and interesting work
- the progress you make in lessons
- the care, guidance and support provided by your teachers and other staff
- the range of out of school activities you are offered and which you value
- the positive contributions you make to the community
- the way the school is led and managed.

What could be improved:

opportunities for more vocational courses, particularly in the sixth form

the opportunities you have to use information and communication technology (ICT) in your work and the facilities for ICT

strategies used for teaching to help you all learn better

We believe that your headteacher and teachers will be able to make these and other improvements and we hope you will all contribute to them and benefit from them.