



Woodlands School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123630
Local Authority Shropshire
Inspection number 292725
Inspection date 8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Melvyn Blackband

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

Type of school	Special	School address	The Woodlands Centre
School category	Community special		Tilley Green, Wem
Age range of pupils	11–16		Shrewsbury SY4 5PJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01939 232372
Number on roll (school)	37	Fax number	01939 233002
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Robin Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–16	8 March 2007	292725

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school provides for boys and girls with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and increasingly with other associated medical conditions. All the pupils are White British. A higher than average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Admissions to the school take place throughout the year. The pupils come from a wide area of Shropshire.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Woodlands is a good school with some significant strengths. The pupils enjoy being there. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They make good progress in their personal development. Parents are happy for their children to attend knowing that they feel happy and confident at school and that their children will be safe and well looked after. Many pupils enter the school with lower than average levels of attainment and a history of poor relationships and exclusions from mainstream schools. Once at the school, they make good progress and achieve well reaching broadly average standards. By the time they leave, most pupils have achieved nationally accredited qualifications and a few are successful in GCSE examinations. The pupils achieve well because of good teaching and the school's excellent procedures for managing their behaviour. Teachers know their pupils very well and set appropriately challenging work. The recording of the pupils' progress and the tracking of their achievements are thorough although pupils are not always given sufficient information on how to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is supplemented by a good range of extra activities. There is, however, insufficient planning to adapt the curriculum to the older pupils' interests and aspirations and they sometimes respond with diminishing levels of attendance and interest.

Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership by the headteacher and the commitment and determination of staff make major contributions to the success of the school. The governing body provides a high level of challenge and support. The school has moved forward significantly since the previous inspection and demonstrates a good capacity to maintain these improvements. The quality of self-evaluation is good overall although the organisation of data limits the effectiveness of the monitoring of academic progress as a means of informing school improvement. The school is developing strong links with a neighbouring school to help pupils to socialise and work with other pupils. As a consequence the school has developed a positive profile in the local community.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve assessment to ensure that it consistently shows pupils how to improve and collate progress data more efficiently so that it can be used more effectively to monitor the work of the school.
- Establish a curriculum which is more closely adapted to the interests and aptitudes of pupils in the 14–16 age group.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Teachers are very good at unlocking the pupils' potential by removing the barriers to learning with which most pupils enter the school. As a result, standards achieved are

broadly average. All the pupils achieve well, except for a small minority who do not attend regularly. Progress in English, mathematics and science is particularly good. Pupils who enter the school with low reading ability make rapid progress and this in turn increases their interest in learning and their self-respect. The pupils work hard to meet very challenging behavioural targets. Their success in reaching these personal goals means a lot to them and is one of the reasons why they make good progress. The school does not yet collate information about pupils' progress efficiently enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is highly successful at changing the negative attitudes towards education with which pupils often enter the school. As a consequence their behaviour is excellent overall. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with particular strengths in moral and social development. The school is graffiti and vandalism free. Along with the good attendance of most learners this is a testimony to them enjoying their time at school. Those spoken to during the inspection said they enjoyed this school better than any other they had attended.

The strong and successful management of behaviour has resulted in a substantial drop in fixed-term and permanent exclusions. Parents are very pleased with the school's work. The pupils feel safe and free from bullying and they gain a good understanding of how to keep safe. They are enthusiastic about the after school and lunchtime clubs and the opportunities for sport and exercise. As a result they cooperate exceptionally well with each other and actively support their teachers and other pupils. Pupils make good progress in their basic skills. However, their development of an understanding of their future economic well-being is satisfactory because opportunities for older pupils to develop work related skills are limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall with some lessons which are outstanding. The teachers have good subject knowledge and they know their pupils extremely well. This enables them to plan well paced lessons which are adapted well to the ability of the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' success. The lessons include a range of activities which provide challenge to the pupils and which have good opportunities for both individual and group work. Teachers and assistants make good use of questions and draw on a variety of learning aids and resources, including the appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT). This enables the pupils to work confidently and achieve well. For example, pupils in Year 11 developed a mature understanding of a modern poem through the teacher's use of sensitive and probing questions, incorporating the good use of an interactive whiteboard. Teachers assess

and record pupils' progress effectively in each subject and they make good use of data in planning future work. Assessment does not consistently show pupils how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is complemented by a good range of well organised activities at lunchtimes and after school. Other activities take the pupils out of school and show them that new things can be learned in all sorts of situations. These occasions do much to promote the pupils' personal development. The provision for basic skills is good and pupils develop a good understanding of keeping safe and of healthy lifestyles. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has not been adapted sufficiently to take account of pupils' interests and aptitudes and does not give them enough opportunities to develop work related skills or to experience college courses. As a result some pupils lose interest in their learning and their attendance suffers. Transition arrangements are not developed sufficiently to encourage leavers to remain in education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of care and support for pupils. Child protection procedures are very good and the school rigorously monitors health and safety issues and risk assessments. The necessary checks on staff are in place. Pupils feel well supported by their teachers. They know who to turn to when in difficulty or upset. The pupils have an excellent understanding of their behavioural progress and targets. They take pride in meeting these targets and this has a significant impact on their developing maturity and good achievement. It is, however, not always made clear to pupils exactly how they can improve their academic work or how well they are making progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the school has established a safe happy environment which supports all learners and which promotes good progress in the pupils' core skills and personal development. The headteacher leads with enthusiasm and has a very strong commitment to school improvement. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and there are firm plans to further strengthen the leadership team. The governing body provides exceptional challenge and support, based on exemplary standards of monitoring. Governors are thus able to play a major part in development. Communication within the school is very good. Staff are fully consulted and they feel involved and valued. The quality of professional training is good and closely related to the school's priorities identified and agreed by the management, staff and governors. The senior team informally monitors every aspect of the school's provision but does not always maintain a record of its evaluations. However, it has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and takes effective action. Information on pupils'

academic progress is not collated sufficiently well to provide the management with an efficient tool to help evaluate this aspect of the school's work. A real strength of the leadership and management lies in the excellent monitoring of pupils' progress in improving their behaviour. This has a very positive impact on their overall achievement.

The school has a good record of improvement since the previous inspection and it has a good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Not long ago I came to your school to see how you were getting on and whether there was anything I could suggest to make the school better. You made me very welcome and I enjoyed meeting some of you. Thank you and well done.

I was only with you for one day. That was long enough for me to realise that you get a good education. You are taught well and your school is well run. You receive good support and make very good progress in learning to control your behaviour and in learning to get on with others. You are provided with a satisfactory range of activities inside and outside lessons. I particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms and talking to some of you at lunchtime. Here are a few of the other things that I liked.

- You obviously enjoy coming to school.
- You show how well you can share things and cooperate with other pupils and staff.
- You all make good progress as you move through the school.
- Those of you with reading difficulties make good progress too.

There are a couple of things which I feel would make the school better.

- Teachers should better organise the information they have about your work and keep showing you how to improve so they can help you make even quicker progress.
- Your teachers should plan more interesting lessons for those of you in Years 10 and 11 so that you get good experience of a wider range of activities, particularly connected to adult working life and college entrance.

Best wishes and good luck for the future.