

# Woking High School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125270
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	293243
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anne Feltham HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1192
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr N Karney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Abbott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Morton Road Horsell Woking GU21 4TJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 888447
<b>Fax number</b>	01483 888448

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 May 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	293243

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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, accompanied by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Woking High School is a specialist technology college, which works closely with other schools and colleges in the area. It is a larger than average school which draws students from the town of Woking and its surrounding villages. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is lower than average. The percentage of students whose first language is not English is higher than average, as is the number from minority ethnic backgrounds. Overall the number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than usual; however, the school hosts a unit for visually-impaired statemented students.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Woking High is a good school, which cares for its students well. One parent wrote: 'My daughter is really keen to go to school and comes home happy with a smile on her face'. This captures accurately the school's ethos. Teachers work hard to develop good relationships in their classrooms and students are keen to contribute to the life of the school and its surrounding community. Woking High takes pride in its ethnic mix and students from a range of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds work well together and help each other prepare for life in a diverse society. One student of African heritage spoke of 'being respected as an individual'; another student of Chinese heritage said, 'My teachers make me feel confident in my abilities'.

Students have a clear sense of right and wrong and behave outstandingly. They look after their more vulnerable peers and participate in a wide range of charity work both locally, nationally and internationally. They seize opportunities to take part in the school's varied sporting, musical and other extra-curricular activities.

Students achieve well and reach above average standards. Specialist technology status has brought the school many benefits and students are enthusiastic about using information and communication technology (ICT) to take their learning forward in many lessons. Technology status has stimulated their motivation and good progress in some subjects, for example, science and design technology, but has not yet made sufficient impact on mathematics. The school's well-designed curriculum also enables students to benefit from other popular subjects, which include drama, history and religious education. Students value the increasing choice of subjects offered.

The school is rightly giving a high priority to further improving the quality of teaching, which is now predominantly good. There are variations across subjects, and the senior leadership team is working hard to bring all subjects up to the quality of the best. Subject leaders are becoming increasingly adept at using data both to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of students and to involve them more in their own learning. However, the school has identified that better use needs to be made of assessment data in some subjects, especially in mathematics.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of their school's strengths and areas for development. The new headteacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school and is well supported by her senior team. The school has continued to build on successes described in the previous inspection report and is tackling weaker areas well. The governing body gives excellent support to the school, contributing to its good capacity for on-going improvement and further success.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics.
- Develop teachers' use of assessment data to involve students more closely in their learning in all subjects, to bring the overall quality of teaching and learning in line with best practice in the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Students' attainment on entry is broadly average. They make good progress through Years 7 to 9 so that the standards they reach at

age 14 are consistently above the national average, although progress in English and science is faster than in mathematics. The standards students reach at the end of Year 11 are generally above average and are on an upward trend. The proportion of students who in 2006 attained higher grades including English and mathematics is broadly average. Good support ensures that students from different ethnic groups, and those with English as an additional language, make equally good progress, as do lower-attaining students and those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards learning. Their behaviour, both in classrooms, and around the school, is exemplary. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of their own and other cultures, which is developed very successfully through the school's international links and specialist status.

Students enjoy coming to school. Attendance is broadly similar to national figures, and has improved over the last year. Good strategies are in place to ensure that all parents and students understand the need to reduce absences as much as possible. Students have a well developed sense of right and wrong, and talk enthusiastically about their respect for difference and diversity. They are proud of this multi-ethnic, multi-lingual school and of the harmonious community which they share. They have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and seize opportunities to take senior leadership roles in school, such as participating in school council meetings, and undertake these well.

The school provides excellent opportunities to link with the community, which students relish. Their wind band and other musical groups are in strong demand. Students' understanding of how to keep safe is excellent. Students in all year groups have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and they are well prepared for the next stages of their life. For example, they greatly enjoyed a recent event when the possible impact of a 'flu pandemic on the country was explored.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is much lively and challenging teaching which engages students well in their learning. A wide range of resources is employed and ICT is particularly well used to excite students' interest. They especially like using the interactive whiteboards, saying that this 'gets the whole class involved' and 'builds confidence'. In lessons where progress is slower, for example sometimes in mathematics, pace is not sustained throughout the lesson and activities are less well matched to the needs of different students.

The school is focusing on assessment for learning, involving students more closely in evaluating their own - and others' - work and setting new targets. This initiative is developing well, but is currently not yet working to full capacity in all subjects. Science, design and technology and drama are subjects where students receive particularly helpful feedback on their learning, which makes them progress more quickly.

Since the previous inspection, teachers in different subject areas have received training in meeting the needs of students learning English as an additional language. This work has rightly been given a high priority by the school, and strategies for improving literacy are benefiting all students.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's curriculum is good and addresses the needs of learners well. The curriculum has been carefully planned and monitored to allow students a range of opportunities; this has had a beneficial effect on the results. Older students have good access to accredited vocational courses which are relevant to the needs of the locality and the take-up on these courses is high. Links with other providers are well developed. The introduction of the extra 'day 11' enrichment timetable is particularly effective in developing team working and enterprise skills, as well as deepening students' understanding of specific curriculum areas. Currently there is a low take-up for modern foreign languages after age 14, although changes are underway to improve this. Higher-attaining students are well catered for through early entries at GCSE in mathematics and humanities and the provision of some GCE AS level courses. Citizenship provision is a strength and all statutory requirements are met.

The school's technology college status has had a very positive impact on the school and its outreach partners. Although in 2006 results in design and technology were below the challenging targets set, current students are on track to meet them. Specialist status permeates other subjects well, although it has not yet had the effect of raising standards in mathematics.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The school cares for its students very well. One parent writes: 'Like many other parents, I am very impressed with the pastoral care provided.' The school's procedures for safeguarding students and ensuring their health and safety are extremely thorough. Procedures for child protection are exemplary. The very occasional instances of bullying are dealt with effectively, and students feel well supported. Senior students have a well-developed sense of responsibility for the well-being of the younger ones.

Students are well informed about future work and career options and educational opportunities, and the school's developing 14-16 curriculum is set to offer further appropriate options. The school collects comprehensive information on students' progress, and this is analysed well by many subject departments. However, the school has recognised that assessment data need to be used more consistently, and in mathematics as a priority, in order to monitor students' individual progress and target further support more accurately.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of leadership and management is good, with some excellent features. The headteacher provides very good direction and is well supported by an extended leadership team which combines experience, enthusiasm and innovative thinking. Middle managers are encouraged to work alongside the senior leadership team, and those who do so benefit significantly from this process.

Self-evaluation processes are good. The work of the school is monitored and evaluated carefully, and there is a strong focus on improvement. Strengths and weaknesses are generally identified accurately, and appropriate strategies are selected to bring about improvement. Some of these, for example, around the improvement of mathematics, are still at a relatively early stage of development. The assessment of, and for, students' learning is a major focus currently and many departments are developing this well. Recognising that there is some variation across departments in the quality of subject leadership, very good line management arrangements have been set in place, aimed at ensuring that improvement strategies reach all subjects. A clear focus on the recruitment, retention and continuing training of staff is a significant strength of the school's management processes.

The school is a very inclusive community and senior leaders and managers are given outstanding support by their governing body in ensuring that all students' needs are met. Governors are actively involved with the life of the school and hold the school to account tightly.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## 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>
--	-----------------------

### 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
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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

17 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Woking High School, Woking, GU21 4TJ

During our recent visit to your school, inspectors enjoyed meeting some of you and listening to your views. Many of your parents and carers completed a questionnaire to let us know how they felt about the school. I hope you will talk to them about the inspection report because it explains what your school does well and how it can become even better.

Woking High School is a good school. There is a very strong focus on learning and achieving and this combines well with the supportive and caring atmosphere, which school staff create. You play an important part in this success, too, as you want to do well and are keen to contribute in, and beyond, school. You have a clear sense of right and wrong and your behaviour around school is exemplary. You are proud of the diversity of languages, ethnic backgrounds and religions in your school, and are preparing well to be 'citizens of the world'. You are already making a significant contribution to the community beyond school through your music, sport and other areas of achievement.

All staff make a really important contribution to your education. The curriculum is well matched to your needs and interests. You have a wealth of opportunities, both during and after the school day, and seize them eagerly. The school's technology specialism has brought you many opportunities, and you use these well, for example in exploiting new technologies to support your learning in different subjects.

You work hard and succeed well in popular subjects, but we think your school is right to focus on improvement in mathematics as a priority. You talked of the excellent feedback you receive from teachers in science, technology and drama, for example. You and your teachers should also focus on other subjects to bring your expertise in those up to the level of your best subjects.

Thank you again for your tremendous hospitality last week - you're great ambassadors for the school! - and we wish you all the very best in your future lives.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Feltham

Her Majesty's Inspector