

Woodfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125481
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293276
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	113
6th form	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Selby
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Lawrence
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2002
School address	Sunstone Grove Merstham Redhill RH1 3PR
Telephone number	01737 642623
Fax number	01737 642775

Age group	11–19
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Inspection number	293276

© Crown copyright 2007

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 Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Woodfield School draws students from a wide geographic area, including Surrey and other neighbouring local authorities. All have statements of special educational need related to learning difficulties. Many students also have other needs including language, behavioural difficulties or are on the autistic spectrum. Several pupils have additional physical disabilities and/or medical needs. The vast majority are of White British background and none speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and six children are looked after by the local authority. Overall attainment on entry is very low compared with that in mainstream schools. For the past five terms, the school has also been responsible for the management and development of the Woodfield Centre which is a local authority resource for students aged 16-19. These students have additional language difficulties and are also drawn from a wide range of schools in neighbouring local authorities. The school has gained awards, including the Healthy Schools Award and the National Litter Award as well as reaffirmation as an Investor in People. The school is a member of the Horley Learning Partnership, a confederation of eleven local schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Woodfield School is a good school with many strengths. It is effective in enabling the pupils in the main school and students in the post-16 centre to achieve well academically in addition to making excellent progress in their personal development and independence.

The vast majority of learners, regardless of their needs or ability, achieve well. Most attain a good percentage of Entry Level and the Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications. The most significant barrier to achievement is poor attendance, which applies to a very small minority despite the best endeavours of the school.

The learners' achievements are due to typically good quality of teaching and learning, a relevant curriculum and an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Teachers, some of whom are outstanding, have good subject knowledge and enjoy excellent relationships with the pupils and students. Increasingly good account is taken of the pupils' preferred learning style and teachers' use of questioning is very effective in challenging the pupils' thinking. Target setting for pupils is generally good, although some lack the precision of the best examples. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of learners with a good balance of academic, vocational and work-related courses which prepare them effectively for life after school. Attendance at local colleges of further education adds much to the learners' academic and social development. The assessment and reporting of these experiences in the 16–19 centre is not always as rigorous as those that happen at school. There is an outstanding programme of enrichment activities which makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. The school's partnership with others is outstanding and has an extremely positive impact on the quality of education provided. For example, the well-established links with its local confederation, outreach schools, local colleges and work experience providers. Overall, the care, guidance and support provided by all staff are good and ensure that students are suitably challenged in a safe, secure environment to face the demands of life after school.

The overwhelming majority of parents support all aspects of the school's work. The school works hard with parents and pupils to maximise learning and achievement. One parent wrote, 'Woodfield is a and;quot;can doand;quot; environment'.

The school's own self-evaluation is accurate and recognises that noticeable improvements have taken place since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher and senior management team lead by example and provide a very clear vision and direction for the work of the school based on a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and her deputy are rightly seeking to further increase the role of all managers and governors in self-evaluation.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The Woodfield Centre has been in operation for five terms and is rapidly increasing its roll and meeting its purpose as defined by the local authority. The students achieve well in the courses provided. The school's management works closely with the centre's manager and although the centre is still in the process of establishing itself and links with the wider community, a good start has been made. Students enjoy using the purpose built facilities and respond well to the additional speech and language therapy in their programmes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all targets for learners and subjects are as sharp as the best examples in the school.
- Ensure that all 16–19 learners' experiences off-site are assessed with the same rigour as those at school.
- Extend the involvement of all managers and governors in self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The pupils in the school and students in the Centre make good progress. They usually meet and some exceed the targets set for them. The strong focus school places on literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) ensures that students make good progress in developing these key skills which will be needed in later life. The pupils' achieve well in a range of nationally accredited examinations, including Entry Level English, mathematics, science and ICT. They also achieve well in vocational studies within ASDAN. Students in the centre achieve well in courses designed to encourage further independence and readiness for life after Woodfield. These studies include Health and Hygiene, Myself and Preparing for Work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. They make noticeable gains in developing their confidence and independence. The vast majority show a sense of enjoyment, take great pride in their school and attend regularly: one hundred per cent attendance is not uncommon and meets with suitable celebration and reward. The pupils respond well to the school's systems to promote good work, attitude and behaviour. For example, regular certification and being 'a pleasure to know' are highly valued. Behaviour is good overall and most students behave very well. Although a small minority occasionally experience behavioural difficulties, any outbursts are managed well by staff so that the learning of others is not disrupted. Bullying is rare and students know what to do if it occurs.

Relationships are excellent and the pupils are sure that their views count. The school council are conscious of their responsibilities and take them seriously. An indication of their status is evident by them receiving presentations from prospective members of staff. Minutes of meetings are kept and communications, although good, do not currently include a display on notice boards. Older students in the centre do not have a similar formal means to communicate their views although they meet with staff every day.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living and they are aware of the need for safety, for example, when taking part in activities such as swimming and martial arts. They make an outstanding contribution to both the school and the local community, for instance, through peer mentoring, fire monitors and community service with young children and senior citizens. Work experience providers and members of the public comment favourably on their attitudes. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong, and they make noticeable gains in developing their awareness

of their own culture and that of others. Regular access to competitive sport enables several school athletes to experience success at the county cross-country championships.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a wide range of teaching methods. Particularly effective is teacher's questioning, which encourages the pupils to think about what they are learning with little room for a yes/no answer. Relationships are very positive and humour is well used and reflects the age-appropriate approach to secondary and further education. Teachers are rightly proud of their self-made resources, such as the school dictionary. Newer technologies, such as interactive whiteboards are used to increasingly good effect. Recent attention to pupils' preferred learning styles has raised teachers' expertise further and experiences are increasingly shared amongst staff. The use of 'learning by doing' is a strong feature of effective teaching as is the willingness of staff to act as learning role models and play an active part in lessons. Teachers work well with support staff, some of whom have additional responsibilities and seek to develop their expertise with additional training. The use of staff expertise, including external staff, is another strong feature of teaching.

Staff typically have a detailed knowledge of the pupils' needs so that work is well matched to their levels of understanding. They make careful assessments and set challenging targets for each pupil. The quality of target setting is good overall, particularly in English and mathematics. For example, to focus on higher level punctuation or to use specific mathematical operations within a range of numbers over a term. Occasionally, some targets lack the precision of the best examples and the intervals between reviews are too long and consequently are less effective. Occasionally, the assessment and reporting of the 16–19 off-site experiences are not as rigorous as those at school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good and has an appropriate balance of academic, creative, vocational and work-related activities. Throughout the curriculum, strong emphasis is placed on developing students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in order to prepare them for life after school which, for most, means colleges of further education.

Suitable consideration is given to the best ways of meeting the range of learners' needs, for example, in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). The programmes for individual learners take good account of their needs.

The curriculum has a very positive impact upon the pupils' personal development which pervades all aspects of school life and enables them to make excellent progress in taking responsibility and in improving their social skills. The school has developed an excellent range of enrichment activities some of which are residential. There are many sporting opportunities, visits to local places of interest, theme days, vocational and work experience as well as lunch-time and after-school clubs.

Where relevant, some pupils access some part of their curriculum, for example, GCSE courses at local mainstream schools. The school's own accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection and the specialist facilities are now very good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The well established procedures and the school's knowledge of the pupils as individuals contribute strongly to their personal development. Risk assessments, staff recruitment, child protection procedures, and health and safety checks are undertaken thoroughly and systematically to safeguard all learners.

Pupils report that they feel safe and have trusted adults to talk to when they wish. Some pupils take an active part in promoting the well-being of their peers. Apart from the genuine concern shown for others with physical disabilities, the recently established 'peer support team' offer help to any pupil who may need it.

The school enjoys good relationships with parents and carers. The vast majority report that they value the support given by the school and find the headteacher very approachable. One wrote, 'they don't just help the pupils, but they help us as parents, too'. A small minority of parents have specific concerns about the suitability of the school's provision in meeting their child's needs. The headteacher welcomes parental involvement and all matters receive appropriate attention with the prime aim of seeking the best outcome for all pupils and students.

Throughout the school and centre, pupils and students make valuable contributions to their own learning and annual reviews, by looking at what they have done and what improvements are needed. Good quality careers advice and guidance is provided from Year 9 onwards to assist the pupils in making informed choices when leaving school. The school's excellent relationships with other agencies, including its learning partnership, speech and language therapists, Connexions and social services have a positive impact upon the pupils' health, safety and future economic well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher gives outstanding leadership and is given excellent support by her deputy headteacher. Together they provide clear vision and direction for the work of the school that is shared by senior managers within the newly formed senior management team.

The school has good systems to develop the skills of all staff and ensures that performance management and training are directed at raising achievement. Subject leaders are becoming more effective in considering the impact of their subjects on pupils' learning. Senior managers are working well with them to bring about consistency in assessment and systematic evaluation and development of their subjects.

The school's well managed outreach function is very well regarded by the schools it supports. Similarly, the school gains and contributes much to its local confederation where expertise is exchanged to the benefit of all schools.

Governors are guided well by the headteacher and as a result offer good support within the recently modified committee structure. They have been involved in overseeing the significant improvements to the school's accommodation and building of the new post-16 centre. Their role as 'critical friend' is developing although they need to be more 'hands on' in school self-evaluation processes.

The headteacher has successfully led the school through a period of significant change since the last inspection and good improvements have been made alongside maintaining the existing strengths. This school has a 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.

Annex A

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?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
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

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	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
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?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

Thank you for your help when I came to inspect your school on 20 and 21 March 2007. The vast majority of you indicated that you like school and that you can go to staff if you need help. You are clear that you enjoy the very wide range of extra activities, such as the clubs, residential trips and sports activities. The inspection shows that the school provides you with a good education and you play your part.

You achieve well. Most of you reach your targets and some of you do even better. By the time you leave, most of you gain Entry Level and ASDAN qualifications. I could see that your behaviour and attendance are good and know that some of you have made real efforts to improve a lot in this area as well as your work. The teaching is good and you appreciate the work staff do for you.

You are rightly proud of your work and I could see how hard you had tried to improve your writing. The assembly I attended was a real pleasure. It's important to celebrate success and achievements and there was plenty to admire. I could see how pleased the whole school was about your cross-country success. I enjoyed observing you making developing your writing and your musical skills, making pizzas, playing badminton and using the computers.

I was very interested in your views about school and I agree with you about the good things that happen at school. I also think it's a good idea to continue talking to teachers about your end of school prom!

I'm asking Mrs Lawrence to do a few things to help make the school and centre even better than they are now. One is to make sure all targets are as useful as possible; another is to make sure all your off-site experiences are properly assessed and finally to carry on increasing the involvement of all staff and governors in checking how good the school is.

Good luck!

Greg Sorrell Lead Inspector