

Woodfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101579
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	307741
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Charlesworth

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	114
6th form	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms P Witham
Headteacher	Mrs D Lodge-Patch
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2005
School address	Glenwood Avenue Kingsbury London NW9 7LY
Telephone number	020 8205 1977
Fax number	020 8205 5877

Age group	11-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Woodfield School caters for students who have moderate learning difficulties together with a range of other needs. Two thirds of the students are boys. Increasingly, students are admitted with more complex needs than in previous years. The number with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) rises annually and one quarter of all students are now in this group. A further quarter have behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). Nearly half have English as an additional language (EAL), with Gujerati, Urdu and Somali being the three main languages spoken other than English. There are three Traveller students, and one looked after student. Nearly half the students are entitled to free school meals, and the number of lone parent families is high. The school is a member of a local Education Action Zone (EAZ) and has achieved the Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Sportsmark, and International School awards. It is currently preparing a bid for specialist school status in sport. A new sixth form building opened in February 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Woodfield is an outstanding school. It has improved since its previous inspection, when it was judged to be good. All issues identified then for improvement have been effectively addressed. Parents are kept very well informed about the school's activities and their children's progress, and they are very pleased with Woodfield. For example, one parent wrote: 'Woodfield School offers exceptional support to me as a parent and my son as a pupil'. Another parent said, 'My son has come on in leaps and bounds since he started at Woodfield...and has developed into a fine young man.'

The school's success derives from outstanding leadership and management. Highly effective systems and practices have been developed and implemented. These help the school support students to achieve extremely well, both academically and in their personal development. The school's motto is 'every Woodfield child matters'. It is achieved through the outstanding care, support and guidance that the school offers. As a result, students' personal development and behaviour are outstanding. Students are often admitted with a history of school failure, poor attendance and low self-esteem. Woodfield addresses these issues exceptionally well. It provides very clear expectations of behaviour, and reinforces the right of each student to learn effectively through the school's Bill of Rights and eight simple rules. Success of any kind is publicly rewarded and celebrated. Sanctions are applied consistently and are fully understood by students. They feel safe in school and know that anti-social behaviour is not tolerated and should be reported. Such incidents are few, and students turn to staff readily if in distress about school or external issues. However, a small number said that they would prefer to sort out what they considered to be minor incidents themselves, should they occur. Sport plays a big part in school life. Woodfield gives students many opportunities to take part in sporting events, both in school and in the community. This helps them adopt healthy lifestyles, have positive options for leisure time and supports their personal development very effectively.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum are outstanding. Students make excellent progress, taking their previous achievement, difficulties and abilities into consideration. Although the standards attained are understandably low in comparison to their mainstream peers', all leave school with accreditation awards, including passes in GCSE examinations for some students. All go on to further education. This prepares students very well for their future lives. The curriculum is thoughtfully devised and very well planned. Relevant adaptations and additions, including therapies, are made for individuals and for the two classes for students with ASD. The curriculum is enriched by clubs, visits, and community links and partnerships. Students' performance is closely monitored and data is analysed to ensure that particular groups or individuals are not disadvantaged or underachieving. Through a highly effective and innovative electronic data base, staff have immediate, clear and very wide-ranging information about each student. This includes, for example, information from their statements of special educational need, targets and support strategies supplied by therapists and external agencies. This information is used very effectively for planning so that students achieve the challenging targets set for them.

The senior leadership team is very effective. Members have high expectations of staff and students, and a high profile in the day-to-day running of the school. This supports its smooth running and the calm atmosphere. The school has a number of very effective systems to track and review all aspects of its work. Self-evaluation is thoughtful and long-established. It involves all staff and takes account of parents' and students' views. It feeds into budget planning,

rigorous target setting and school improvement. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively. It is fully involved in strategic development, for example working hard with the local authority to secure the building and appropriate funding for the new sixth form centre.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form provides outstanding education and care. The accommodation, judged inadequate in the previous inspection, now provides a very good, independent base for the sixth form. Day-to-day work is autonomous from the main school. However, the effective systems and practices extend to this department and contribute to its high quality provision. The students' achievement and personal development are outstanding. They make excellent progress in relation to their starting points although the standards attained are understandably low in comparison with their peers in mainstream schools. The students are relaxed, confident and capable young adults. The curriculum is exceptionally well designed, planned and taught. It provides an interesting and broad range of activities that leads to accreditation and supports students' independence, maturity and work prospects. The sixth form prepares students very effectively for the next step in their lives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work with students to help them understand the best way to involve adults in dealing with anti-social incidents that might occur, either in school or out of it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' enter the school with a range of difficulties and their attainment on entry, whilst very wide ranging, is very low overall. Robust tracking systems show that students make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Individuals almost always meet challenging termly targets that are set for them in each subject. The achievement of students in different groups, for example girls, Travellers and various ethnic groups is carefully considered. Staff analyse progress data to identify any underachievement, and strategies are implemented to improve it. This has recently proved successful with Year 9 boys with BESD. Students make outstanding progress during Key Stage 3 with that in science and information and communication technology (ICT) being particularly strong. It is slower in English, generally due to the students' difficulties with writing. However, the increasingly effective use of ICT is having a positive effect on this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The students clearly enjoy school very much. The many celebrations of their achievements have a very good effect on their attendance, behaviour and desire to succeed. Attendance is improving, although the figures are affected by a few long-term absences. The students understand rules and sanctions. Behaviour is outstanding. Exclusions have reduced considerably since the previous inspection. There are now very few and only used as a last

resort. Students make healthy choices, for example frequently choosing sport as a reward and fully embracing the school's emphasis on healthy eating. The students wrote the school's anti-bullying code. Students care for one another and their spiritual development is evident in their growing self-esteem, ability to reflect and compassion for others. Cultural diversity is widely celebrated, and the school helps students to appreciate the global community. Woodfield is culturally harmonious and racist incidents are few and far between. Students are very well prepared for their future lives and economic well-being. They contribute to the school community through the school council, and take on additional responsibilities, such as giving advice to those in detention. Students contribute to the wider community by inviting members of the local community to events, raising money for charities and supporting their international partner schools in the Connecting Classrooms project.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Through close monitoring, the school has a very clear understanding of the strengths of teaching and its strong impact on students' learning. The senior leaders have set high expectations with clear guidelines and training for staff, for example on the structure of lessons, the use of ICT and the management of students' behaviour. Consistency in these aspects, along with a strong focus on collaborative working and the use of very good resources and aids to teaching and learning are particular strengths. Performance is monitored effectively. Where necessary, staff are supported and coached until their work is of a sufficiently high standard. The quality of teaching is underpinned by an outstanding curriculum and excellent support from the school's intranet database. Advice on students' levels of attainment, progress, suitable teaching and learning strategies and behaviour management are included. Teachers incorporate this information into detailed lesson plans, which also take account of each student's subject and learning targets. Consequently, each individual's wide-ranging needs are met, and they learn very effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Woodfield provides an outstanding curriculum. Considerable thought has gone into ensuring that it meets the students' particular needs and interests and will be as useful as possible to their future lives and well-being. The school has recently reviewed the curriculum to strengthen and further reinforce cross-curricular links and learning. Good adaptations have been made for the students with ASD to help them learn more effectively, but still be able to work within, or transfer into, the main school when ready. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for community involvement and collaboration with mainstream partners. Planning is outstanding. Each subject has a detailed scheme of work with clearly identified learning objectives. These support planning for lessons and for individuals' progress. A wide range of curriculum enrichment enhances and enlivens learning. This is promoted through partnerships with schools, colleges, arts and sports providers and includes visits, including regular residential experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

This outstanding aspect of the school's work underpins students' achievement and personal development. Suitable policies and procedures are in place to safeguard students' welfare and promote their care and well-being. The staff team comprises education and a range of other professionals. Their combined contribution to individuals' care, and the guidance and support they give in relation to academic and personal development, and students' future lives and well-being, is very effective. Careful track is kept of students' attainment, progress and personal development. The school's systems ensure that all groups of students, for example girls, those for whom English is not their first language, and those with particular difficulties have their needs fully met. Achievement, success and improvements, for example in behaviour and attendance, are tracked, rewarded and celebrated. Students with mental health issues are very well supported. The school has a counsellor and seeks external support for individuals as needed. Alternative provision, supported by the school, is found for students who find attendance or conforming particularly difficult. Woodfield's parent liaison officer supports vulnerable families and promotes the strong partnership with parents. The school has taken on the national Every Child Matters agenda wholeheartedly. All staff are involved in a working group which reviews the school's work in each of the five outcomes for children, and sets termly targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Woodfield's senior leaders form a strong and very effective team. They spearhead and implement the outstanding systems and practices that help the school to continually improve its provision, and provide support and guidance for staff and students to make it happen. The school's commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and high achievement is clear, and students leave school well prepared for adult life. School self-evaluation and performance monitoring are very well established. They extend throughout the school so that all staff have responsibility for students' achievement and for school improvement. Students themselves influence aspects of the school and are increasingly monitoring their own performance, through, for example, the new computer-based credit system. Governance is effective with a strong role in strategic decision-making. However, not all individual governors have the same depth of knowledge about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Finances, enhanced through successfully secured grants, are used very well to improve and develop the school. Of particular note are the school's efforts to secure appropriate sixth form provision, the extended day and extra therapies for students. The school has a number of enriching partnerships with local schools and schools abroad, other establishments and organisations and its partners in the EAZ. It provides effective outreach support to special and mainstream schools inside and beyond the local authority. The effectiveness of improvement since the previous inspection and the continuing drive towards excellence indicate an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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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?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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 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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
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

17 June 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Woodfield School, London, NW9 7LY

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school. I would also like to say a special thank you to the group who came and talked to me and to the sixth formers who looked after me so well. I came to Woodfield to see how it is working and how well you are all doing, and I was very pleased with what I found. I agree with the school staff and your parents; this is an outstanding school.

I think that the staff work very hard to help you stay safe and healthy, enjoy your work and prepare you for the next stage in your lives. Teaching is excellent and you receive outstanding care and support. This means that you make excellent progress. I am impressed at how many awards you gain at the end of Year 11 and the sixth form.

During my visit, I could see how much you enjoy lessons and the many celebrations of your successes. I am very pleased by how much this encourages you to attend regularly, behave well and try your best. I think that your behaviour is very good indeed. You have very nice relationships with one another, although I know that some of you said you find it difficult to control yourselves, so, well done! A few of you say that although you know you can always turn to a member of staff if you are involved in an incident in or out of school, even though they are infrequent, you might not choose to do so. I have asked the headteacher to follow this up with you, because talking to an adult if you are in difficulties is definitely the best thing to do.

Woodfield gives you a wide range of very interesting things to do. Its links with so many outside schools and organisations are great for helping you work, learn and play sports alongside other students your age. I hope that it will encourage you to continue to do this, make safe and healthy choices and make the most of your adult lives.

I wish you all the best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Judith Charlesworth

Lead Inspector