

Wood Green School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123238
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314550
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Nigel Fletcher HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1147
6th form	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Warner
Headteacher	Miss C Savage
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Woodstock Road Witney OX28 1DX
Telephone number	01993 702355
Fax number	01993 774961

Age group	11-18
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Inspection number	314550

© 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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wood Green School is a popular comprehensive school of larger than average size. The majority of its students are from Witney, with the rest from the local rural community. A large majority of the students are White British and the proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than the national average, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is higher. Wood Green became a specialist visual and performing arts school in 2005. It acquired Investors in People status initially in 1999 and has since achieved re-designation, among other local and national awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wood Green is a good school. It has a caring and inclusive ethos where students respect their teachers and peers in a calm, productive learning environment. The management team has the support of staff, parents and governors and the good quality of leadership and management across the school is a key reason for the school's success. School leaders have a good understanding of how well the school is doing and the means by which it can improve further.

Standards reached are above those found nationally and students achieve well in their learning throughout the school. These are complemented by the good progress they make in their personal development. Students enjoy school and arrive eager to learn because, as one parent reported, 'The staff are dedicated and committed to giving their best to the pupils'. They behave well around the school and have good relationships with adults and each other. They feel safe and are confident about the good care and support they receive from staff. Parents report favourably on the progress and growing confidence of their children. The development of skills which prepare students for the world of work is exemplary.

The academic curriculum meets the needs of students well, although the school is aware of the need to improve vocational opportunities in Years 10 and 11. There is also an extensive range of additional sporting, cultural and personal development activities. One parent commented, 'Wood Green has given our boys the best all round education we could imagine possible in their teenage years'. Teaching is good overall, but in some lessons insufficient attention is given to helping students understand how to improve their work so that they are able to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection and the specialist status in visual and performing arts is having a good impact on improving learning across the school. Students value the new dimension that this has brought to their school such as visits by artists and theatre groups. The school has a strong capacity to continue to improve and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the sixth form is good with some outstanding features. Standards are above national averages, and achievement is good. Students have access to an outstanding curriculum through the school's membership of a local consortium of secondary schools and a further education college, and through the wide range of enrichment activities available in the school. Their personal development is outstanding. Students' attitude to work is excellent. They communicate confidently with adults and relationships are good. Many opportunities are available for students to take responsibility and to play an active part in their community, such as being reading mentors and 'tango patrollers'.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the best lessons are well-planned, creative and engage students in independent learning. However, some teachers miss opportunities to help students take responsibility for their own learning. Effective systems are in place to identify and support students who are at risk of missing their targets.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. However, the school recognises that there is a need to develop further the monitoring and evaluation procedures so that analysis

of outcomes enables managers to know how to achieve higher standards. The capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency and sharpness of monitoring and evaluation by middle management to produce clear targets for actions.
- Improve teaching and learning through helping students understand how to improve their work so that they are able to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students achieve well and attain standards that are above the national average. They enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is broadly average although this fluctuates year by year. In Years 7 to 9 students make good progress, especially in English; attainment in the national tests for English, mathematics and science are all particularly good.

Achievement by the end of Year 11 has improved since the previous year with students now performing well. Boys make better progress than girls, although girls reach higher standards. GCSE results are above the national average, representing good progress compared with similar schools. Attainment at the higher levels at GCSE is good although there is some variation in performance between subjects. Overall, the proportion of students gaining five or more A*-C grades is above national averages, and well above when including English and mathematics.

The school analyses the performance of specific groups of learners and takes action to address any differences. For example, low-attaining girls have made less progress than others over time, but targeted interventions have been effective in improving their performance. As a result, there is little variation between the achievements of different groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The personal development and well-being of students are good, excellent in the sixth form, and contribute well to their achievement. Students enjoy being in school and attendance is good. They are keen to participate both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities, often run by the students themselves. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good through personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and events such as Holocaust Day and Africa Day. Students have ample opportunities for reflection and are guided in an understanding of care and respect for others. As a result, there is a strong sense of community and mutual support, and a shared sense of pride.

Students have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They are rightly proud of their new restaurant, and that it serves food grown in the school's own garden. Students feel safe. They say that bullying is rare and that any instances that do occur are dealt with quickly and effectively. Behaviour around the school is good. However, where the behaviour of a small minority of students is less than good it is managed well by staff. Students are represented well by the school council who are proud of their contribution in, for example, introducing a new school uniform, establishing 'tango patrol', and encouraging environmental issues such

as working towards becoming an Eco school. Contribution to the wider community is good, and in the sixth form is outstanding, with students providing support in local primary schools, communities for the elderly, and with charity events. The preparation and support that students receive to develop work-related skills provides an excellent foundation for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school's monitoring and evaluation of teaching has begun to identify areas for further improvement and these are being addressed. Most lesson planning is effective with teachers ensuring that students know what they are expected to learn and taking account of their different needs. Some outstanding lessons enable students to be involved in their own learning, and to think for themselves, resulting in very good progress. However, the extent to which students are enabled to develop independent learning skills is inconsistent. Through the school's specialist status, information and communication technology (ICT) resources have improved and are used well to support learning. Consequently, teachers adopt more adventurous teaching styles that engage students more and improve their learning.

Relationships between teachers and students are good and contribute strongly to achievement. Assessment of students' progress is used well to plan for further lessons in most subjects, but some teachers do not make sufficiently clear to students what they are capable of and how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of its students. In the sixth form it is excellent. There is a good range of options and the school has effective guidance systems to ensure provision matches need. Imaginative timetabling, and the introduction of a variety of new one-year courses, such as horticulture, are viewed positively by students. Collaboration with local schools has introduced greater flexibility for students in Years 10 and 11, but the school has rightly identified increased access to vocational learning as a future priority.

An extensive range of extra-curricular activities including sporting, arts, musical and drama opportunities is provided across the school. The school is rightly proud of this area of its work, with students having achieved many national awards. Participation is high and the school offers a broad range of residential trips both at home and abroad. Many students take part in charitable work and a thriving Duke of Edinburgh programme contributes to learners' enjoyment, personal development and achievement. Specialist status is having a positive impact on the breadth and diversity of the arts curriculum throughout the school and a wide variety of community groups and arts practitioners are now involved in its work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

'There is a strong, caring and supporting ethos in addition to a commitment to developing the children's full potential' is a parent's rightful summing up of the care, guidance and support provided by the school. The school creates a safe and caring environment in which students flourish. Procedures for safeguarding children are well established and statutory checks are in place. The exemplary guidance and support arrangements for pupils entering Year 7 ensures a good transition from primary school.

Vulnerable students, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are supported well, although the effectiveness of learning assistants in lessons is inconsistent. The Space2Learn area provides high quality support, both for small groups of students with particular needs and for the wider student population who appreciate the opportunity to access support on a drop-in basis. For example, it provides students with the space to reflect and receive advice on anger management strategies. The academic tutoring system provides good one-to-one support for students with both academic and pastoral needs. The school has effective systems and strong links with external agencies to ensure the students' welfare. Students are confident that they can confide in staff and that their problems will be quickly and effectively dealt with.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team works well with a committed staff to create a thriving school which cares for its students and enables them to make good progress. The headteacher's leadership is strong and passionate. She sets a clear direction and builds well on the skills of her colleagues to promote a clear focus on inclusion, and to create the conditions under which students can flourish and make good progress.

The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate, and draws on a growing range of data and the views of parents and students. Monitoring and evaluation processes are well developed, although in some areas they are used less effectively by managers to target improvement and evaluate the impact of actions taken. Target setting, especially at student level, is used well to raise achievement.

The school's designation as a specialist visual and performing arts school has brought additional resources which have been used well to raise achievement and foster the personal development of the students. The school manages its finances well, balancing its budget while finding resources to plan much needed improvements to accommodation. It provides good value for money. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive, and challenge school leaders appropriately. Their detailed involvement in evaluation has had a good impact on recent improvements. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Recent action to raise achievement demonstrates that there is good capacity for further improvement.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
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?	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ 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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	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?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

3 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Wood Green School, Witney, OX28 1DX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, talking to your teachers and other staff and visiting lessons. Many of you and your parents told us how the good relationships between you and the staff meant that you enjoyed school and felt that you were progressing well.

You told us that your school provided a good education. We fully agree with this view and are satisfied that the school leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has many strengths and we were particularly impressed by:

- the way the school is led by senior staff and the commitment of its staff
- the courses and other activities that the school provides to ensure that you have the best opportunities to make good progress in your academic and personal development, particularly in the sixth form
- your attitude to learning and healthy living, and the way you treat each other with respect
- the commitment of the school to continue to improve the overall experience you receive at school.

To make your school even better we have recommended that:

- managers improve the way they check on how the school is doing so that they can produce clear actions and targets to enable you to make even better progress
- teachers help you in lessons to understand what you can do and how to improve your work so that you can take greater responsibility for your learning.

The senior staff and governors know what needs to be done to improve the school and have plans to do it. We believe that if you behave well and work hard in lessons, and help the school put these plans in place, then standards will rise further. On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making our visit so enjoyable and we wish you every success for the future.

Nigel Fletcher HMI

Lead Inspector