

# Woodlands School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125469
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	315243
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	James Bowden

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	82
6th form	12
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Stephen Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hilary Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Fortyfoot Road Leatherhead KT22 8RY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01372 377922
<b>Fax number</b>	01372 376434

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<b>Age group</b>	2–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Woodlands provides for learners with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties (SLD and PMLD). Many learners also have a wide range of additional needs including autism, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), sensory and physical impairments and high levels of medical need. All have a statement of special educational need. The Early Years department takes learners with a wider range of difficulties where they undergo formal assessment for a statement of special educational need. Following this, some are placed in other types of special needs provision or in mainstream schools. The present accommodation operates on two sites, the main building and a nearby mainstream secondary school for the majority of learners aged 14 to 19.

Currently a third of learners have PMLD and two-thirds SLD. The vast majority of learners have at least one additional need. Many also have visual or medical needs. The vast majority are of white British background. Five learners from ethnic minorities are at the early stages of English language acquisition. Ten learners are looked after either by the local authority or by the health authority.

The school has maintained its Investors in people Award since 1997 and Healthy School Award since 2003. More recently, it was re-assessed successfully for an Artsmark Award and gained Sports Mark and Active Mark Awards also. It is subject to re-organisation proposals as part of the local authority's reallocation of site use.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides very effectively for its learners and meets fully its aim of recognising and meeting the individual needs and potentials of every learner in all aspects of life and learning, through a caring and professional approach. It is a calm but stimulating environment and the school has significant strengths. A major strength is the partnership with other schools and professionals. This enhances considerably the quality of learners' well-being and progress throughout the school. The school also works closely with parents and carers who are appreciative of its work, as shown by the positive comments from the many who returned the parental questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection. One commented, 'Woodlands provides an excellent environment for my child. The school staff are very professional and caring towards my child and the whole family.'

Learners' personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, is outstanding. Those at the main site enjoy the school's celebratory assemblies and the opportunities for active involvement in these, one younger learner being particularly pleased at helping light a candle to signal the start. Older learners improve their confidence and self-esteem considerably as a result of being based at the mainstream secondary school site. This prepares them really well for the next stage of their life. The school also provides high quality care, guidance and support for learners and is highly successful in supporting each individual in very specific ways. All, including the most vulnerable, are extremely well looked after in a safe, healthy and caring environment. The dedication, enthusiasm and commitment of all staff in working with learners underpin this aspect of the school's provision.

Achievement overall in the main school is good. Although standards overall are very low because of the extent of learners' complex special needs, the progress they make is good. All learners operate at 'P' levels - levels that are below the standard National Curriculum levels in schools. Those in the Early Years and Foundation Stage make brisk progress towards these levels. Achievement in the sixth form is excellent - all students at the end of last year gaining accreditation and moving on to further education.

Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers plan their lessons extremely well to ensure that the work is suitably pitched to challenge the range of capabilities in their classes. This ensures progress is made towards the targets set in learners' individual education plans (IEPs). Good quality information and communication technology (ICT) resources are used very well to enliven learning, improve motivation and develop learners' communication skills. The more confident learners are also enabled to improve their competencies in the use of ICT. Learners enjoy their lessons, one commenting, 'Teachers are friendly and help you.' The curriculum is good. It is adapted suitably to meet the needs of learners very well and there is a focus on learning throughout the whole day. However, the range of accommodation restricts the range and breadth of what can be taught and means that achievement overall is not as good as it could be. At the main site, the small-sized rooms limit the number of wheelchair users in each room.

Leadership and management are excellent. There is a very strong ethos that promotes learning, achievement, and high quality integrated care and education. There is robust monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. These ensure that achievement, and high quality personal development, are at the forefront of the school's work. Until very recently, the school has not been able to analyse assessment data accurately enough to provide sufficiently high quality information to inform future strategies. Accurate self-evaluation has helped the school to

identify this lack, as well as other developments which are necessary to improve further. Governance is outstanding. The school's improving track record, developments since the previous inspection and the clear direction set for further improvement show there is excellent capacity to improve.

### **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

#### **Grade: 1**

Sixth form provision is highly effective and learners achieve exceptionally well. Although standards are well below those expected for their age, all leavers gained skills-based and communication certification at the end of last year. Learners' independence and social skills improve considerably and they are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their life. Their progress is enhanced really well as they are based at a nearby mainstream secondary school and enabled to experience the life of this school and join in a wide range of enrichment activities. As a result, learners' attitudes are very positive and they are appreciative of the education they receive. Teaching is outstanding because it meets fully their needs and aspirations for the future. The curriculum, including a wide range of enrichment and preparation for life activities, is also excellent in this respect. Outstanding care, guidance and support promote learners' personal and academic development particularly well. Leadership and management are excellent and there is a clear direction and purpose to promote high quality provision, which results in success for all.

### **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

#### **Grade: 1**

The Early Years and Foundation Stage provides a highly rewarding and enjoyable experience within a safe and caring environment. Though standards on entry are below national expectations, learners' achievement is excellent. Progress through the 'P' levels is particularly strong in language and communication and personal, social and emotional development. It is outstanding in relation to the newly introduced early learning goals, many achieving 'one step' after only six months. Learners' personal development and well-being are outstanding. In classroom activities, they behave well, learn in different ways, at different rates, follow instructions, and learn through movement and their senses. Teaching meets fully the diverse needs of all learners with well-planned and purposeful activities. All staff actively teach 'good' behaviour and successfully encourage learners' independence. Detailed records of individual learners' progress are kept in order to evaluate progress and ensure targets set in IEPs are challenging. Leadership and management are excellent, setting a clear direction for development and with a focus on achievement and personal development and well-being. There have been clear improvements since the previous inspection.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Address the unresolved accommodation issues.
- Develop the quality of assessment data to produce better information to help inform planning for future strategies.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Achievement is good, and is particularly high in the sixth form and the Foundation Stage. Attainment on entry is well below that expected for learners' ages. Although standards remain low by the end of Years 6 and 11, learners make good progress. In relation to their starting points, they are meeting the expected rate of progress for learners with their particular needs. Learners also make good progress towards the targets set for them in their IEPs and towards the individual targets set for them at the annual review of their statement of special educational need. Some join mainstream schools on a part-time basis during the week as a result of this. Learners also grow in confidence and language and communication skills improve considerably well.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Because of the exceptionally high level of support from all who work in the school, learners have positive attitudes to school. On arrival there are smiling faces and very positive relationships between adults and learners. Though the attendance of some is hindered by medical needs, there is minimal unauthorised absence. Learners enjoy taking part in physical activities, including swimming and other formal physical education activities throughout the day, and eat healthily whilst at school. Behaviour is excellent and, at playtimes, learners play sensibly and well together. They take an active part in the life of the school, expressing their views through the school council, which, one learner commented, '...does good things'. They are being very well prepared for their future education because they are enabled to make choices, both verbally and non-verbally, are developing independence in their personal care and improving their social skills. In many activities, they are also developing very well their use of ICT.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Positive working relationships between learners and all staff underpin the quality of learning in lessons. Activities are made interesting, good quality resources are used well and effort and achievement are constantly rewarded. When appropriate, learners are encouraged to work independently. In a Key Stage 2 art lesson, more able learners worked productively using computers and followed verbal instructions very well. This helped keep them on task and encouraged their enthusiasm for learning. Staff use oral praise and encouragement extremely effectively, which helps motivate learners very well. The recently introduced group for learners with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) has enabled more effective learning because of specific strategies and organisational arrangements. Teaching assistants (TAs) work very effectively alongside teachers and provide valuable support, particularly in monitoring the progress learners make.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum is well matched to the needs of learners and ensures they are successful in meeting their IEP targets. There is a clear focus on communication, language, literacy, and numeracy as well as an on-going focus on learners' personal skills and attributes. This ensures they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, the range and quality of accommodation, an issue at the previous inspection, limits the breadth and range of curriculum for secondary aged learners, which in turn means they are not always achieving as well as they could. A wide range of enrichment activities, both on and off-site, broadens learners' experience. Sensory rooms, sensory display areas, soft play areas and a range of outdoor play areas and resources enhance provision very well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The wide range of support and guidance offered by the school results in learners who are happy to attend and behave well, and who develop in confidence and independence as they progress through the school. Small groups of learners were willing, for example, to meet with the inspector to give their views on the education they receive. Close working relationships with a wide range of other specialist agencies and professionals contribute extensively to learners' development and well-being. The school has been particularly successful in ensuring minimal unauthorised absence. There is also excellent quality support for parents and carers, including specific courses. Learners' personal development is closely tracked, as is their individual performance in relation to 'P' levels and their IEP targets. This enables teachers to plan individualised programmes to meet learners' precise needs. This enables them all to make a successful transition to the next stage of their education.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The headteacher and her senior leaders have a clear focus on improving the quality of education the school offers. The new senior leadership staffing structure has helped clarify what the school needs to do to improve further. Revised grouping arrangements for learners have resulted in better progress for those with PMLD and ASD. Although the school has much assessment data on learners, the quality of this is underdeveloped, as is its use to help inform planning for future strategies. There is a whole-school commitment to ensure that every learner really matters and that as many of them as possible experience aspects of mainstream education in other schools. Resources are very well deployed to ensure learners make progress. The governing body is highly effective in its role as a critical and supportive friend of the school.

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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?	2	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
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	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	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?	1	1
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?	1	1

<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>	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	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

03 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands School, Leatherhead, KT22 8RY

I recently spent two days at your school and visited some of you in lessons at both sites. I also chatted to some of you individually as well as to small groups of you. Thank you all for being ever so friendly and making me feel very welcome. I was particularly impressed with your behaviour and your very positive attitudes, and how happy you are being there. This is because:

- the headteacher and her senior team lead and manage the school really well
- you make outstanding progress in the early years and in the sixth form and good progress in the main school
- your personal development is outstanding, which prepares you really well for the next stage of your education
- excellent teaching helps you to improve your communication and language skills and make progress towards the targets teachers set for you in lessons
- the curriculum and other activities during the day make your education very interesting
- all adults who work with you make sure you are very safe and extremely well cared for
- they are very dedicated, have your interest at heart and want to make sure you do well in the future
- the headteacher and her senior team have plans to make things even better for you.

To make things even better the school should:

- improve the accommodation
- use assessment about you as individuals in a better way.

Once again, many thanks for your welcome and I should like to wish you all the very best for your future.

James Bowden

Lead Inspector