

New Woodlands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100763
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	323337
Inspection date	5 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Kay Charlton

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	5–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Gillian Harewood
Headteacher	Mr Duncan Harper
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2006
School address	49 Shroffold Road Downham Bromley BR1 5PD
Telephone number	020 8314 9911
Fax number	020 8314 3475

Age group	5–14
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' achievements
- the effectiveness of the curriculum
- the impact of leaders on school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and pupils' work, and from a scrutiny of the school's documentation and progress data. Inspectors also analysed the parent questionnaires and had discussions with senior leaders, pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

New Woodlands is an integrated school and outreach service for pupils who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Since the last inspection the provision has been extended to include secondary pupils aged 11 to 14. Pupils are referred directly from mainstream schools to the outreach service and support is often arranged in their mainstream setting. Sometimes a short-term placement at New Woodlands School is judged to be suitable and this is done without the need for a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils receive support from other agencies, including social services and health services. Pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, the most predominant being Black British and Black Caribbean. Few speak English as an additional language. The school has been granted the 'power to innovate' by the Department for Children, Families and Schools. Mainstream schools part-fund places at New Woodlands.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

New Woodlands provides outstanding education for its pupils. Creative and innovative practice in working with pupils who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties underpins its success. The excellent way that it works with other schools ensures that pupils receive the support they need at an early stage. This is a key factor in preventing permanent exclusions in schools across the borough. Parents hold New Woodlands in high regard and one parent's comments sum their views up very well: 'It does a great job'.

Pupils who attend New Woodlands School for an intensive programme make outstanding progress in both personal and academic development because of the very high levels of individual care, guidance and support they receive, excellent teaching and the exciting curriculum. The assessment of pupils' needs is comprehensive and ensures that staff quickly gain a detailed picture of each pupil's strengths and areas that are in need of improvement.

Outstanding teaching, which takes full account of pupils' needs, ensures that all get off to a flying start and by the time they leave they have made outstanding progress. Even though the standards pupils attain are well below those expected for their age, they represent excellent achievement given pupils' starting points on entry. Extremely positive relationships between staff and pupils, and a fully consistent approach to managing behaviour, form the bedrock of pupils' highly effective learning. Teaching is particularly well enhanced by the support staff, who play an important part in helping pupils to develop the confidence they need to succeed. All staff use the school's rigorous system for setting targets extremely well to motivate and challenge pupils. They also use a wide a range of different teaching approaches to accelerate pupils' learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, pupils are very proud of the progress they make and are keen to show others their work. The emphasis given to first-hand, practical learning is a key feature of the school's successful teaching. This was exemplified well in an outstanding literacy lesson seen in Year 8 where pupils showed great enthusiasm when writing about their visit to Five Bridges Park. Information and communication technology, particularly digital photography, was used very well in this lesson, as it is across the school, to support pupils' learning.

Pupils' greatest needs are in the area of personal, social and emotional development and staff seize every opportunity to reinforce the school's high expectations. They are thoroughly consistent in their approach and value pupils' every effort. As a result, pupils of all ages make substantial gains in developing confidence and independence and all aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. The ways in which pupils learn to think through their actions and the effects of these on others are impressive. This ensures that they work together in a very harmonious atmosphere and that behaviour is excellent. Pupils say that they 'learn good manners and respect for others', really enjoy school and appreciate the friendships they make. They are very clear about the need for a healthy lifestyle. They take an active part in a wide range of physical activities, including a significant amount of outdoor education. Pupils pay particular attention to acting safely and look after each other very well. Attendance is good and, for many, much improved since first starting at the school. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their own and the wider community. They do this, for instance, through the school council and through taking on responsibilities such as older pupils helping to look after younger ones when they go out on visits. Pupils develop the skills that prepare them for their future education extremely well. Their return to mainstream schools is very

carefully organised and, consequently, New Woodlands has a very successful record of reintegration.

The curriculum is outstanding because teachers tailor activities so effectively to pupils' needs and abilities. The whole staff and outside professionals, such as the police, all play a part in creating a wide and comprehensive range of learning activities that are closely linked to the National Curriculum. These are very well resourced and flexibly organised to cater for each pupil's personal circumstances. As a result, pupils tackle challenging tasks with enthusiasm. The programmes for English and mathematics are major strengths and, combined with excellent teaching, result in the pupils' outstanding progress in learning basic skills. The exceptionally wide range of enrichment activities, including residential visits, plays an important part in pupils' enjoyment of school.

An exemplary level of care is given to pupils who say, 'that staff listen to us and help us'. The systems for supporting pupils' personal development are extremely effective with the Inclusion Team playing a vital role. Staff ensure that pupils learn about others of different backgrounds and beliefs and develop the social skills needed to be successful members of the wider community. There is rigorous tracking of each pupil's academic and behavioural progress. This information is used very effectively to organise extra support for individuals; for example in reading or counselling. The way in which pupils learn to review their own as well as others' progress is impressive, as was seen in a 'True Time' session. Their comments show that they develop a clear understanding about their strengths and also the areas where they still need to improve. The school's work with parents and outside agencies supports pupils' development exceptionally well.

The vision, energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher and senior team are driving New Woodlands forward on a path of continual improvement. This has ensured that the school has been able to meet the challenge of taking older pupils so well that pupils of all ages make outstanding progress. All staff work together and with those in other schools extremely effectively to ensure that pupils receive very high-quality education. Staff development is exceptionally well focused so that all gain the skills and confidence they need to address the wide range of pupils' needs. Governors challenge the school very well, for example through their regular monitoring visits to classes, and they ensure that it provides excellent value for money. The school is highly effective in promoting equality of opportunity and community cohesion. Consequently, pupils from widely differing backgrounds act as excellent ambassadors for their school and promote the profile of those with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties at a local and national level. The school's rigorous self-evaluation ensures that everyone is clear about its strengths and areas that are in need of development. Excellent use is made of the information about pupils' progress once the outreach service starts to work with them to ensure that the provision is highly effective in supporting their development. However, the school has rightly identified that it does not, as yet, have sufficient information about pupils' progress once they leave. This is so that it can refine its provision further to ensure it is as helpful as possible in supporting pupils to continue their excellent progress after they reintegrate into mainstream schools. The clarity of the senior team about what are the most important next steps for the school, along with the determination of all staff and governors to provide the best, mean that New Woodlands has excellent capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Obtain sufficient information about pupils' progress once they leave to ensure that provision is as helpful as possible in supporting them to continue their excellent progress after they reintegrate into mainstream schools.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Woodlands School, Bromley, BR1 5PD

I would like to thank you for all the help you gave me when I came to visit your school. I judged New Woodlands to be an excellent school and it was great to see how well you are all doing. I was very impressed with the ways in which you think through how you might improve so that you can return to mainstream schools. I could see that you gain a lot of confidence and you learn to behave very well indeed. I was glad to hear that you enjoy school so much and that you make good friends. I agree with you that it is important that 'there is always someone to talk to' if you need help.

Your teachers plan exciting and interesting things for you to do and you clearly appreciate this, including the various visits out of school and activities such as salsa dancing. I saw that you are trying hard in your lessons and that, because of the excellent teaching, you are improving your reading, writing and number skills.

The headteacher and senior teachers are very clear that they want to see the school improve even further and have some very good ideas about how this might happen. One thing that I agree they should do is to find out more about the progress you all make once you go back into mainstream schools so that, if necessary, they can change aspects of what New Woodlands does. This is to help you continue to make excellent progress when you move to your next school. You can play your part by continuing to try your hardest at all times.

Yours faithfully

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector